



Vol. 435 Pp. 20

Amravali and Upagupta

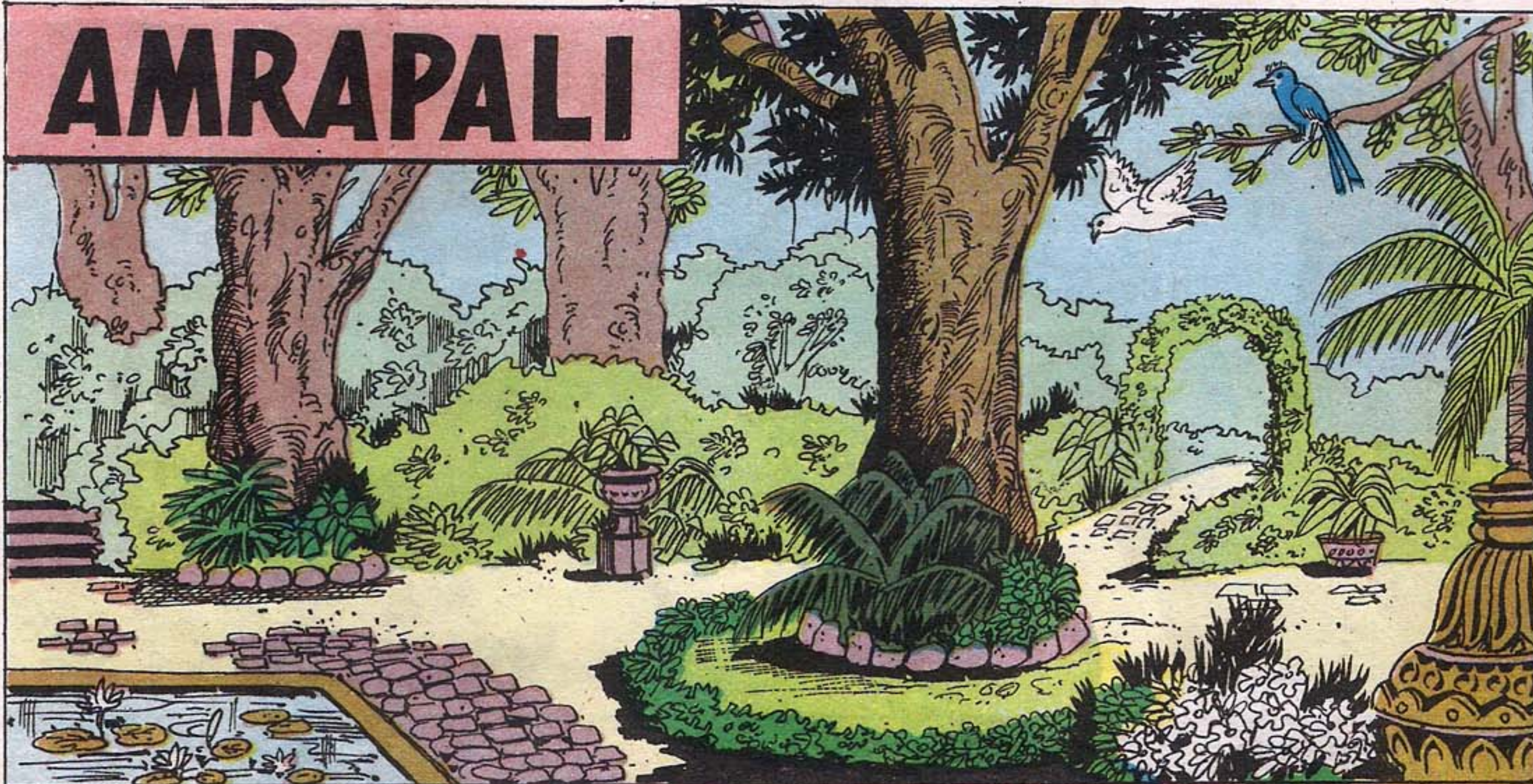


TWO BUDDHIST TALES

Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India

IBH

AMRAPALI

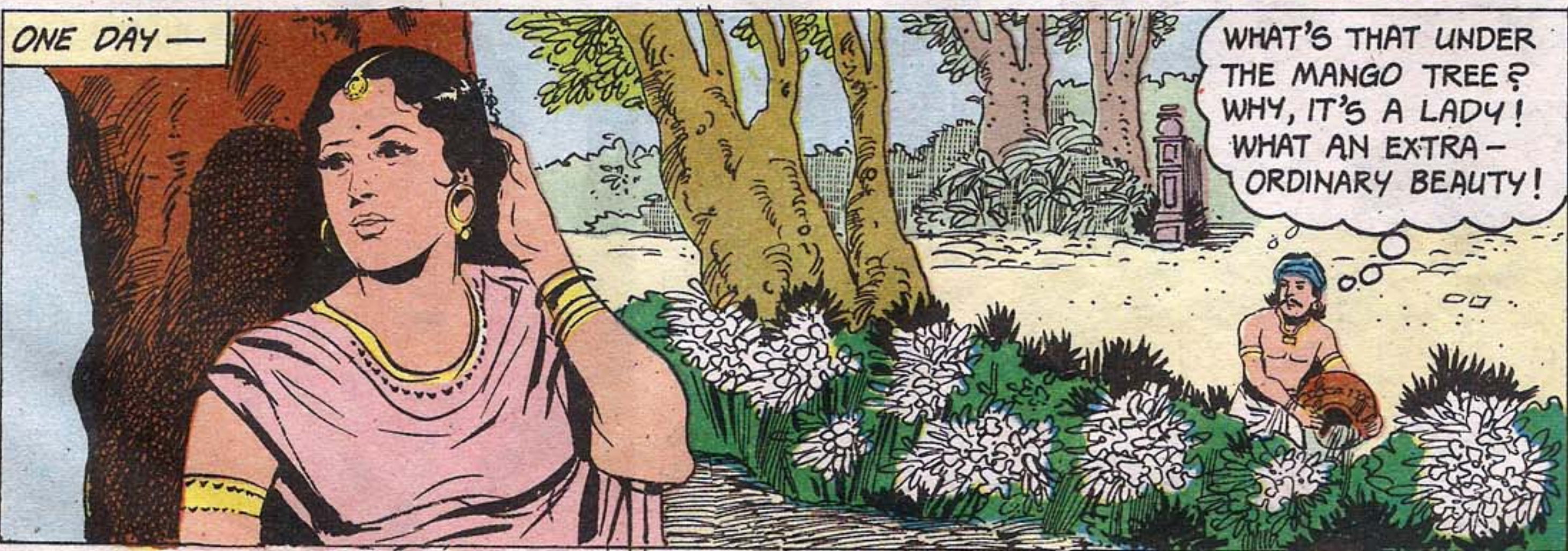


THE LICCHAVI NOBLES, WHO RULED OVER ANCIENT VAISHALI, WERE GREAT LOVERS OF BEAUTY AND TOOK A KEEN INTEREST IN THE MAINTENANCE OF THEIR GARDENS.

THE BEST OF GARDENERS WAS EMPLOYED TO TEND THE PLANTS.

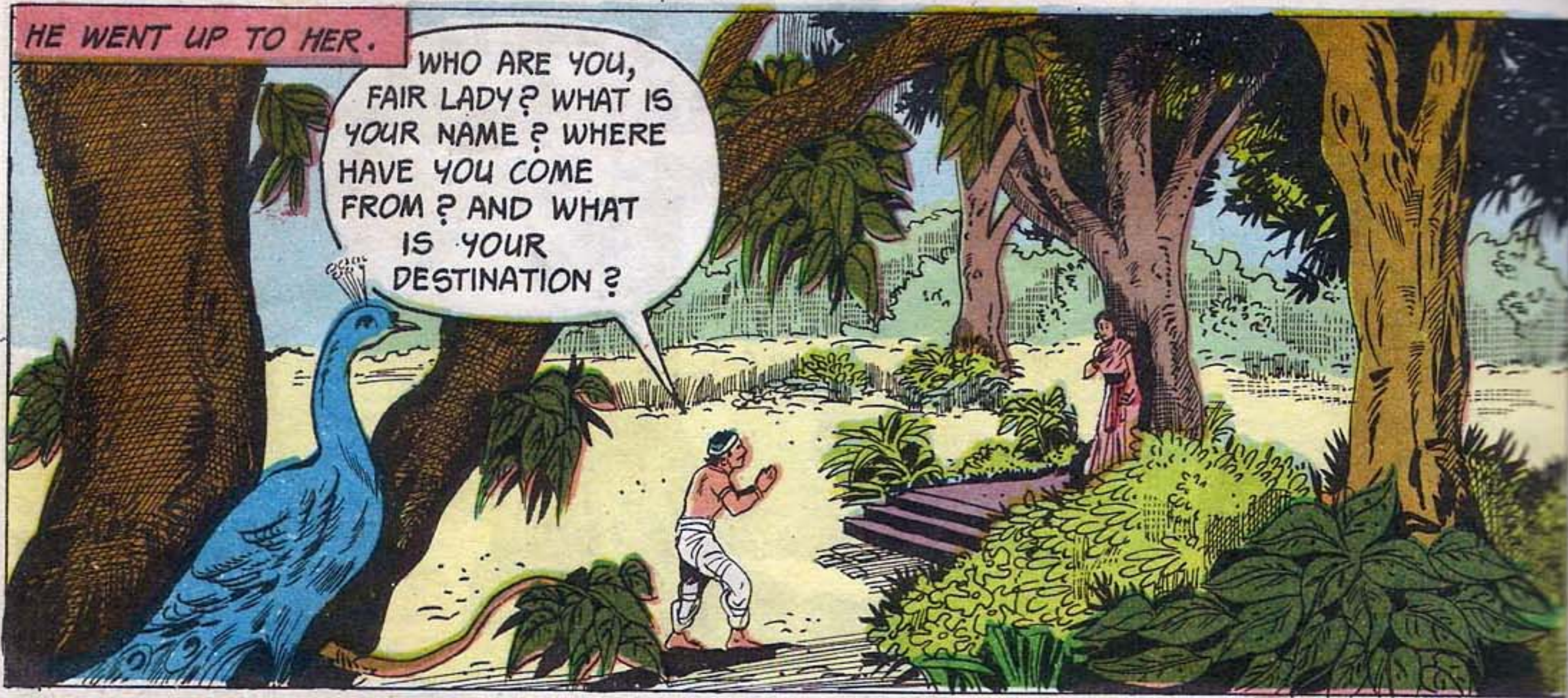


ONE DAY —

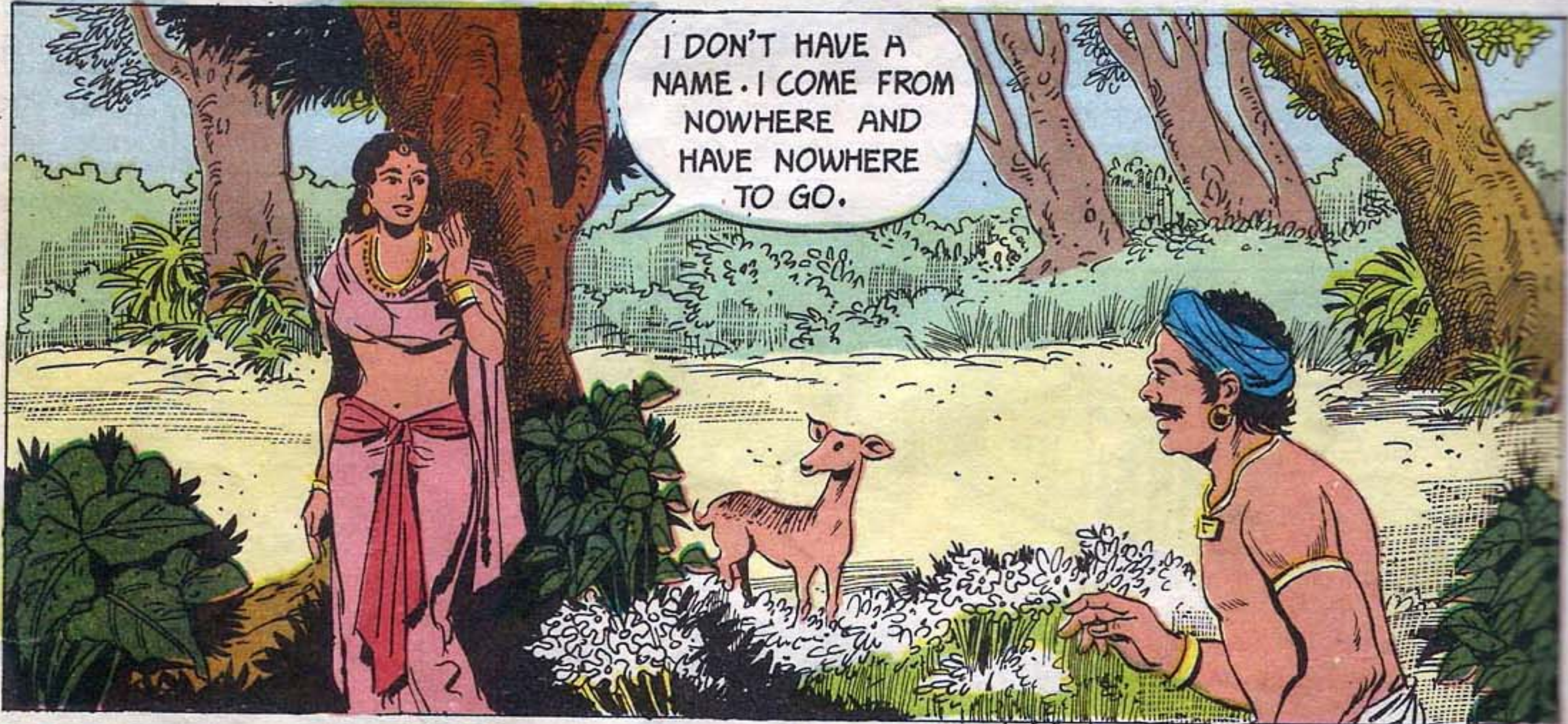


HE WENT UP TO HER.

WHO ARE YOU,
FAIR LADY? WHAT IS
YOUR NAME? WHERE
HAVE YOU COME
FROM? AND WHAT
IS YOUR
DESTINATION?

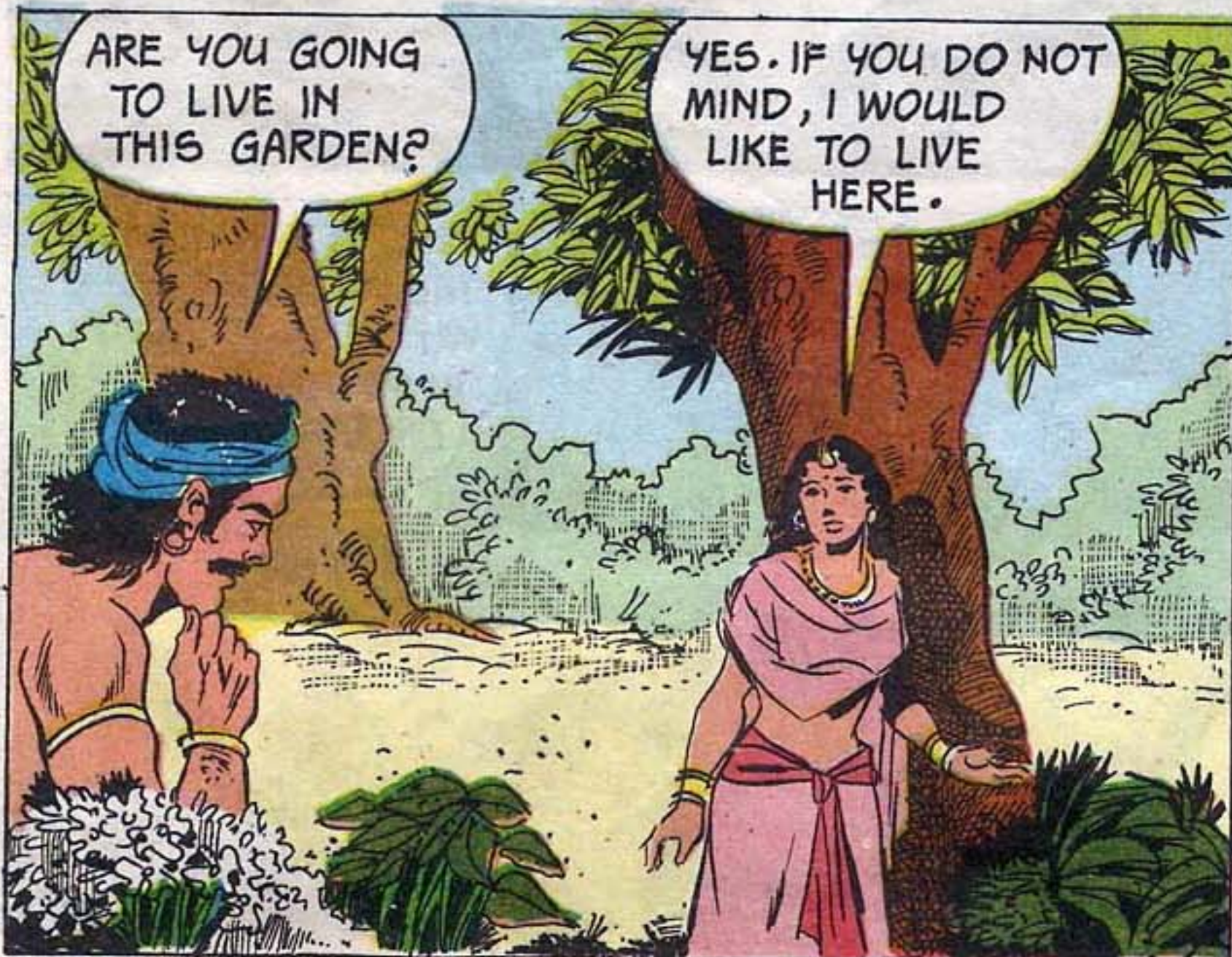


I DON'T HAVE A
NAME. I COME FROM
NOWHERE AND
HAVE NOWHERE
TO GO.

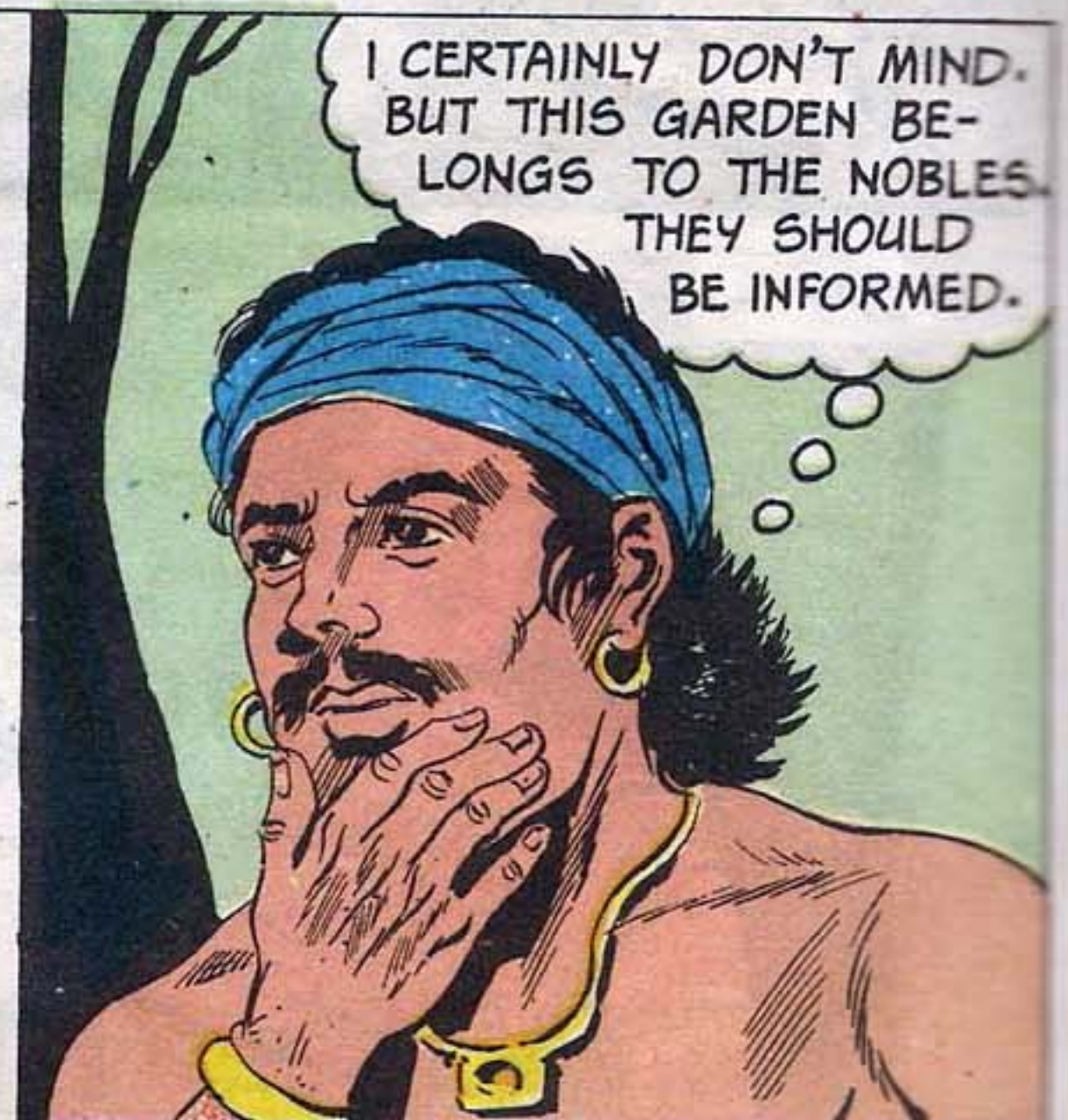


ARE YOU GOING
TO LIVE IN
THIS GARDEN?

YES. IF YOU DO NOT
MIND, I WOULD
LIKE TO LIVE
HERE.

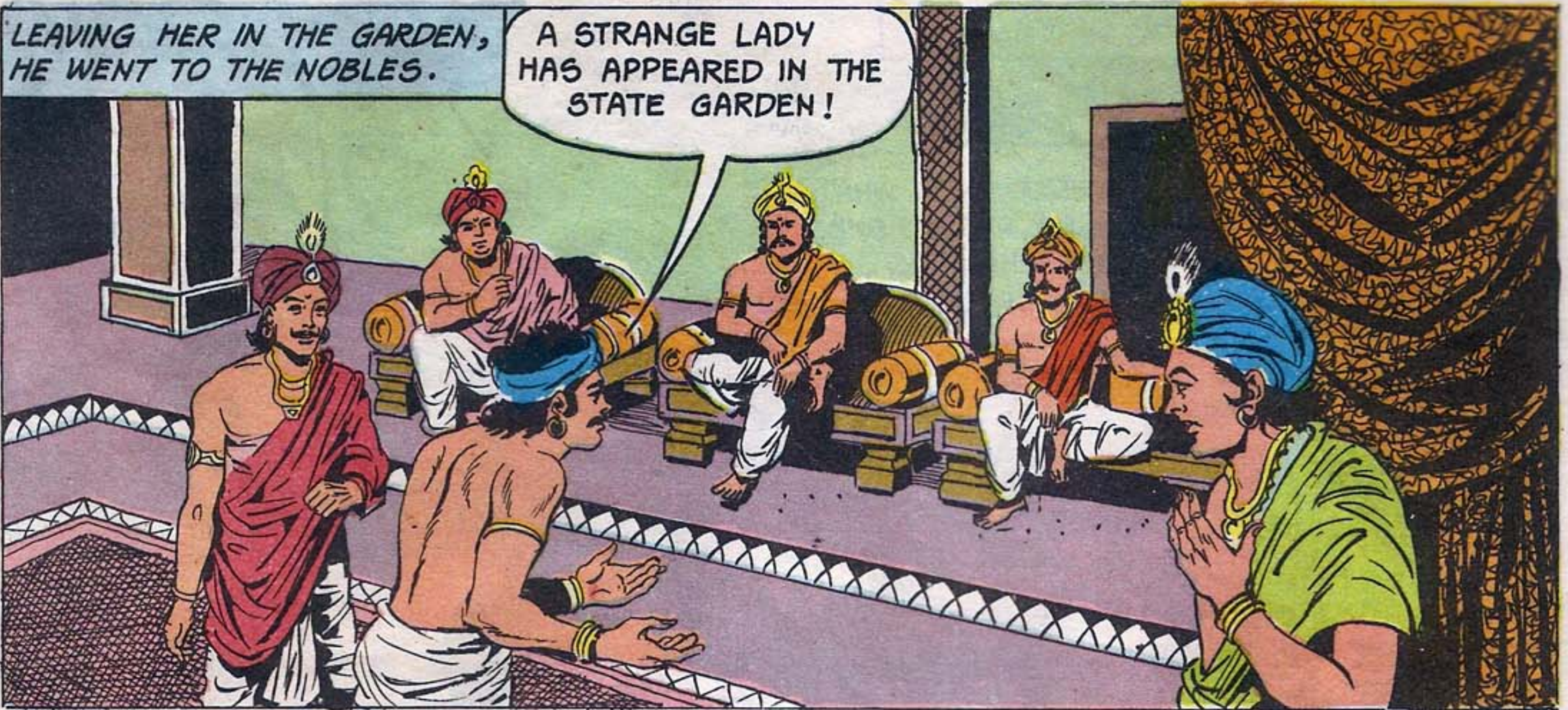


I CERTAINLY DON'T MIND.
BUT THIS GARDEN BE-
LONGS TO THE NOBLES.
THEY SHOULD
BE INFORMED.



LEAVING HER IN THE GARDEN,
HE WENT TO THE NOBLES.

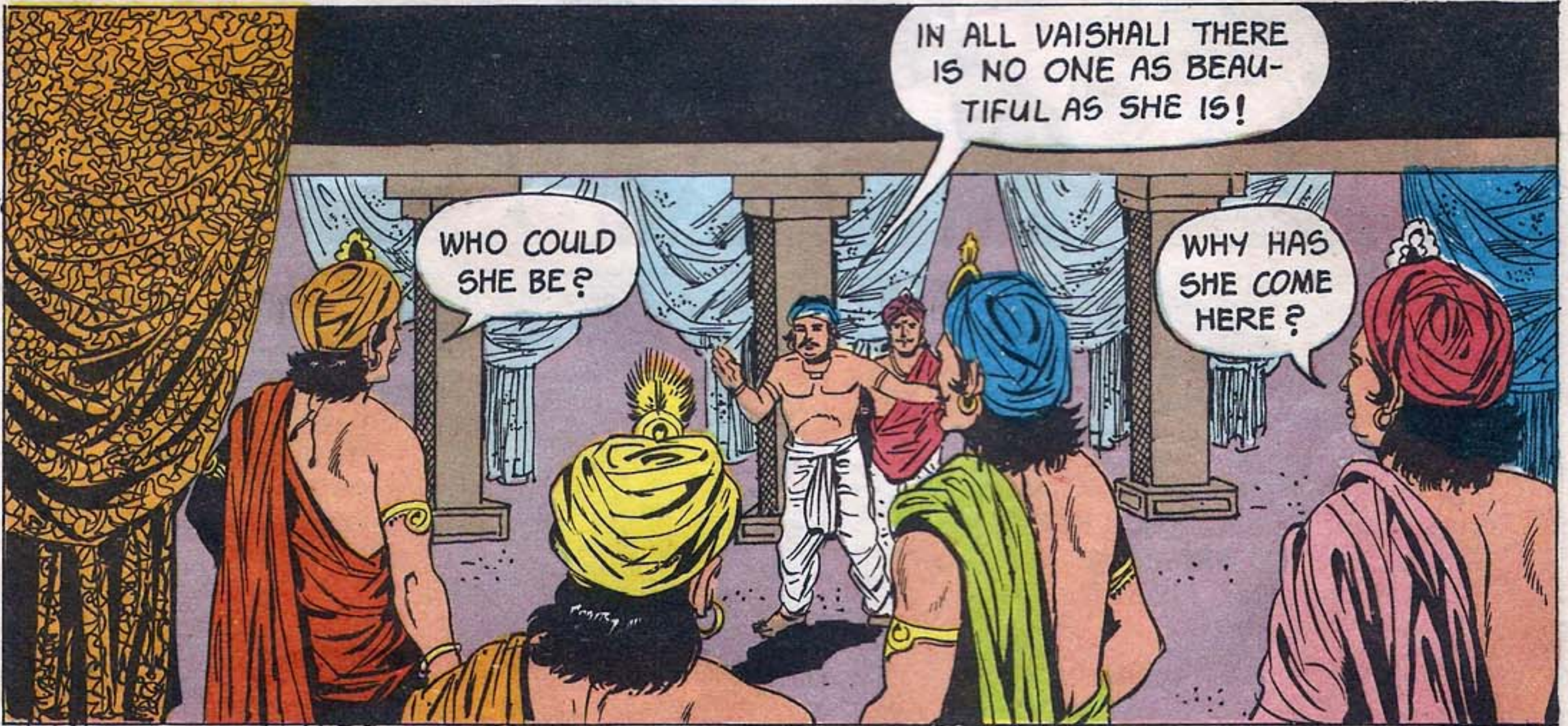
A STRANGE LADY
HAS APPEARED IN THE
STATE GARDEN!



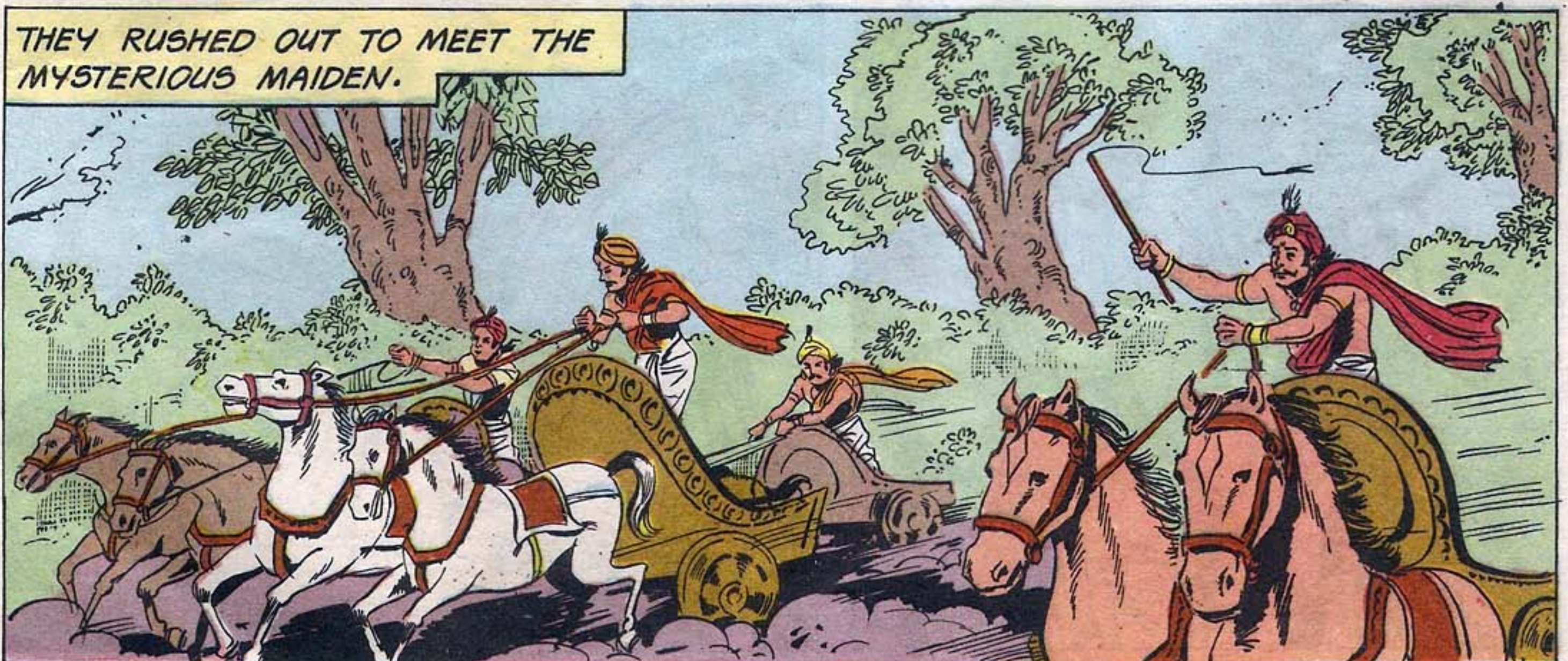
IN ALL VAISHALI THERE
IS NO ONE AS BEAU-
TIFUL AS SHE IS!

WHO COULD
SHE BE?

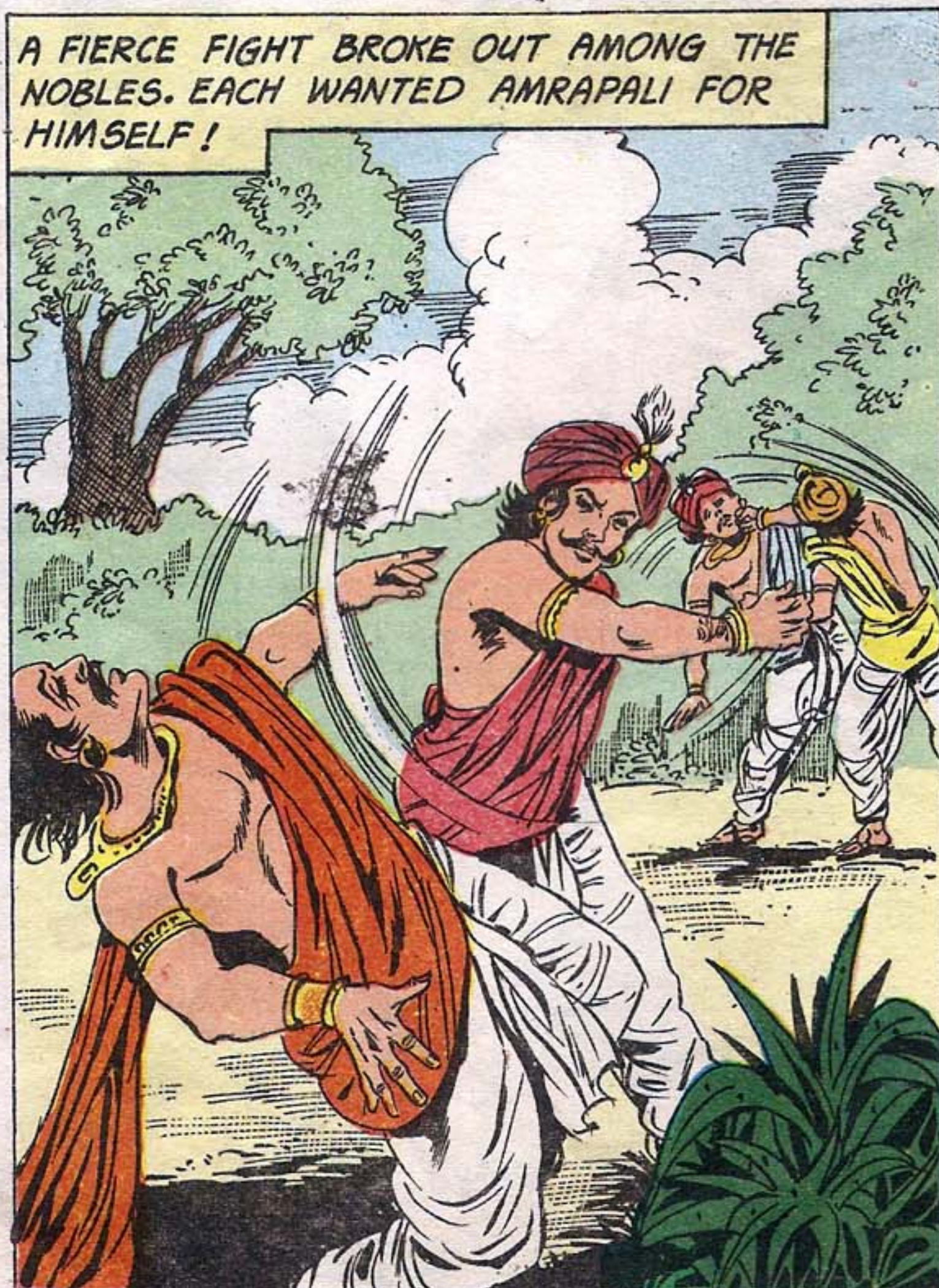
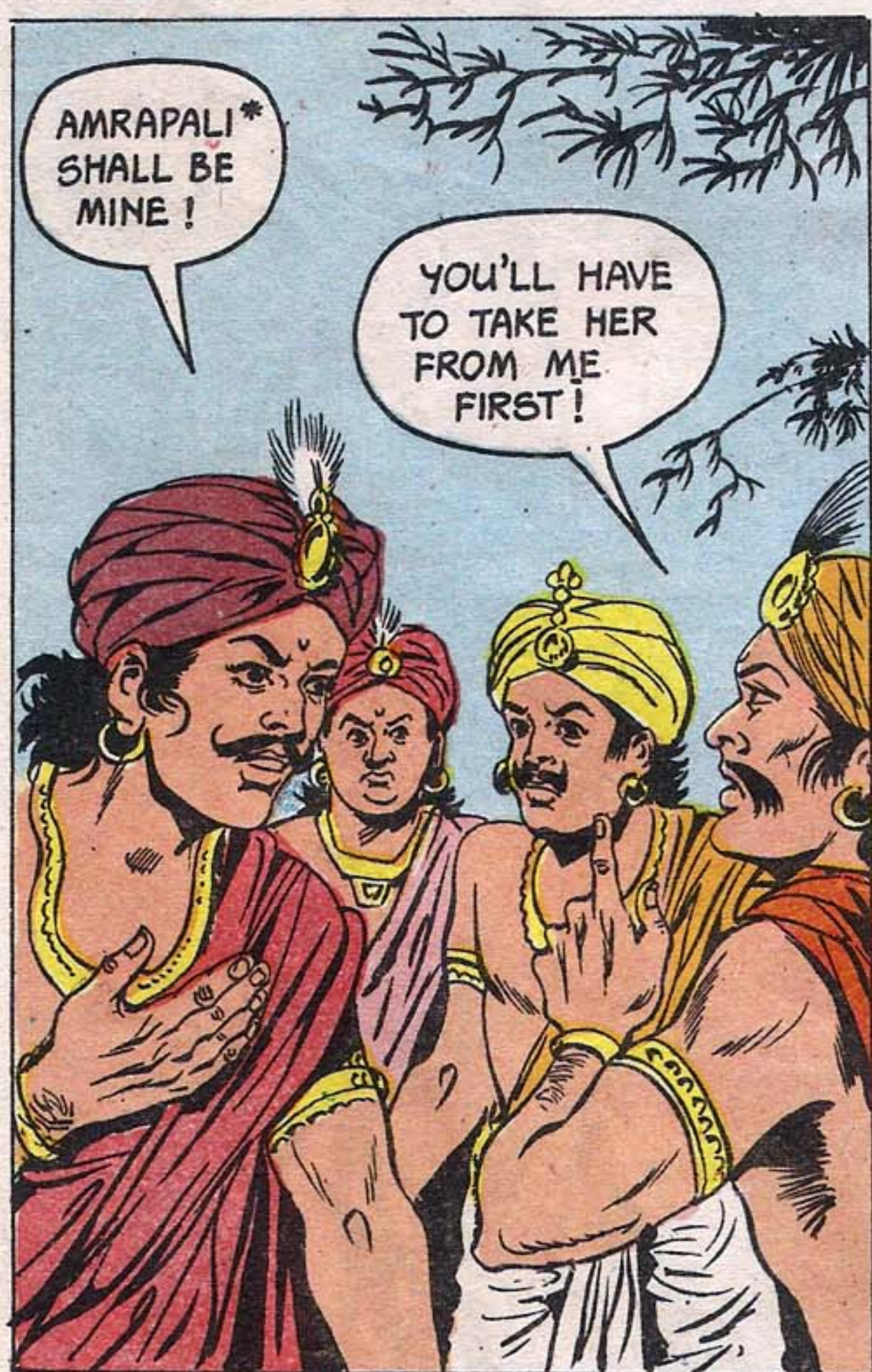
WHY HAS
SHE COME
HERE?



THEY RUSHED OUT TO MEET THE
MYSTERIOUS MAIDEN.



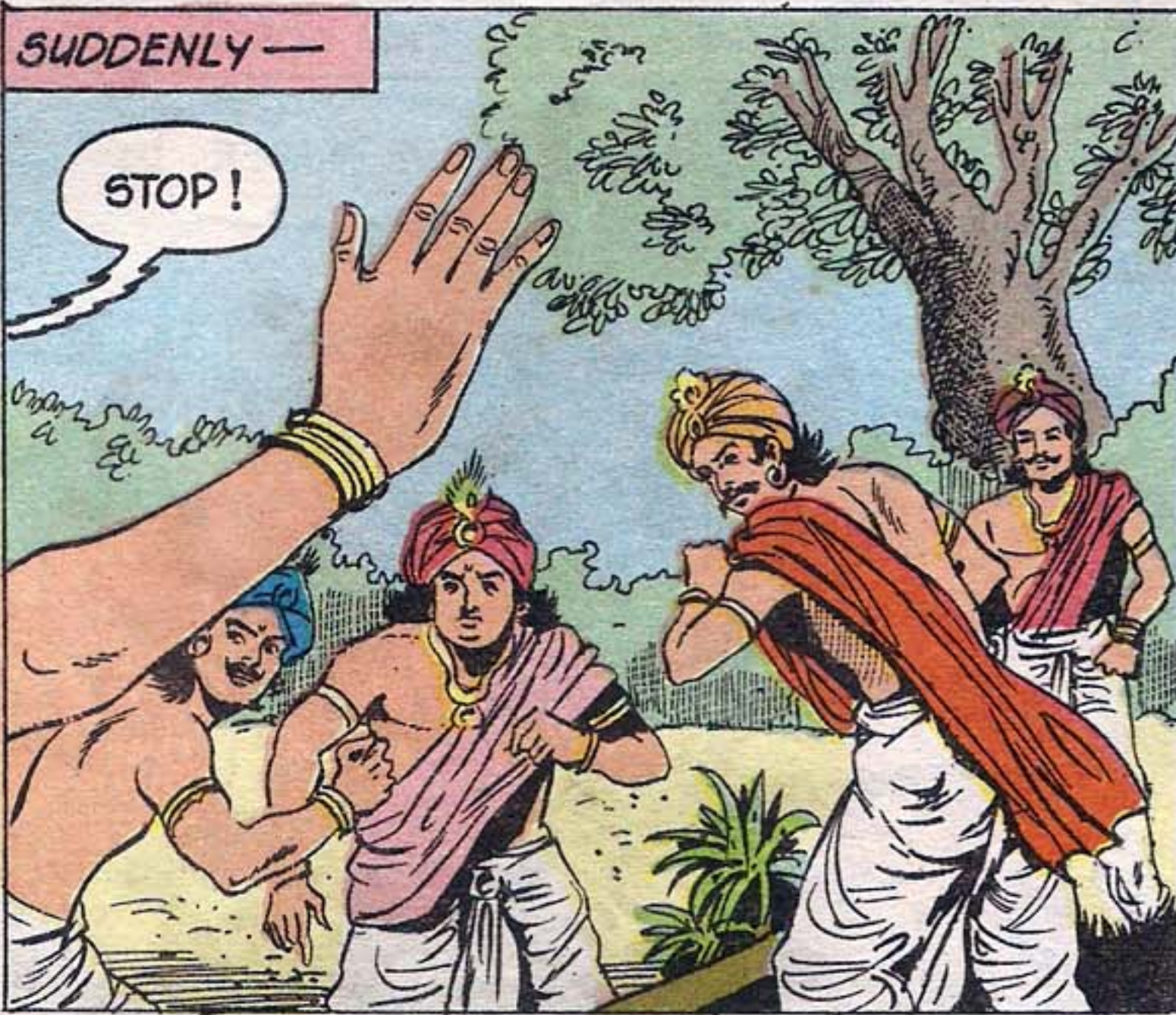
WHEN THEY REACHED THE GARDEN —



* THE MANGO-GIRL, AS SHE WAS FOUND NEAR THE MANGO TREE

SUDDENLY —

STOP!



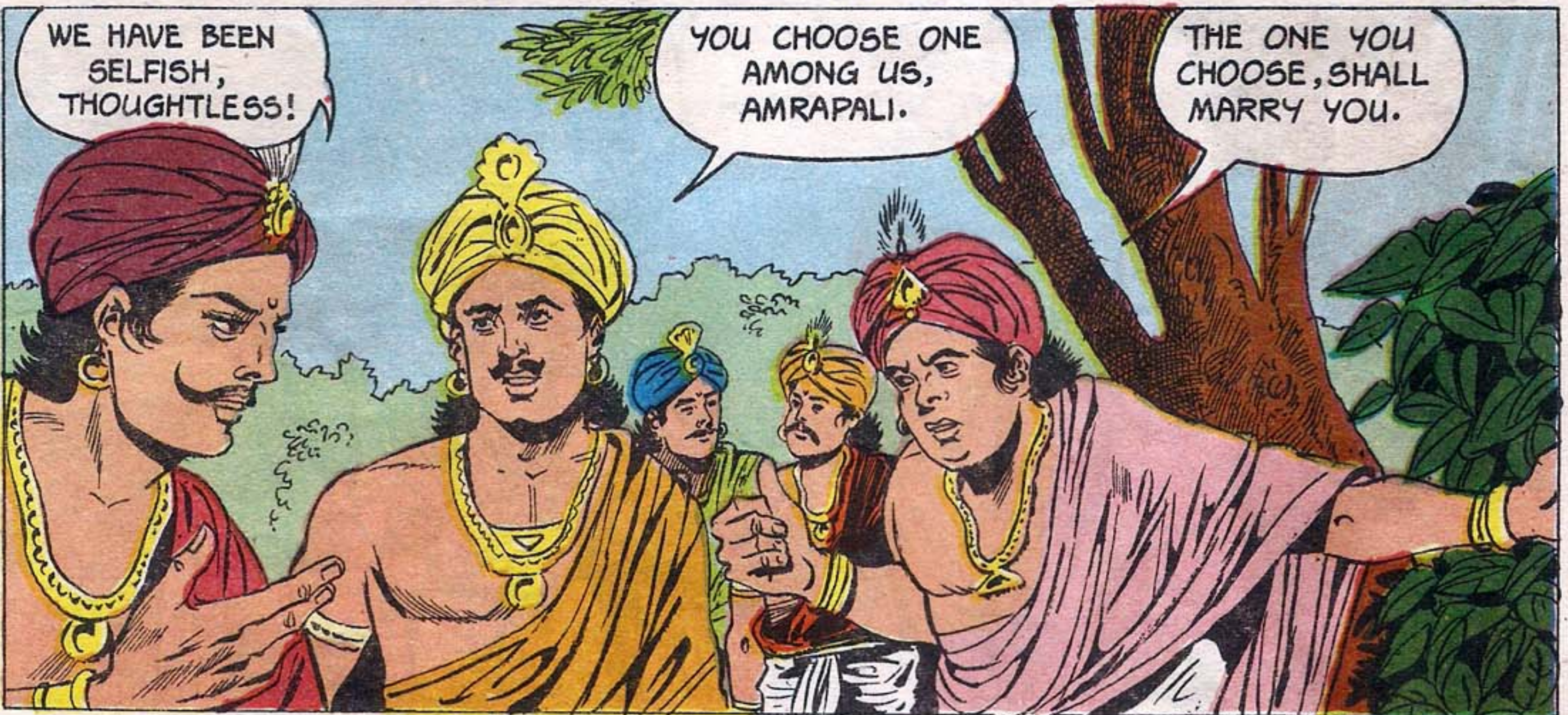
DO I HAVE NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER? CAN I NOT HAVE MY SAY?



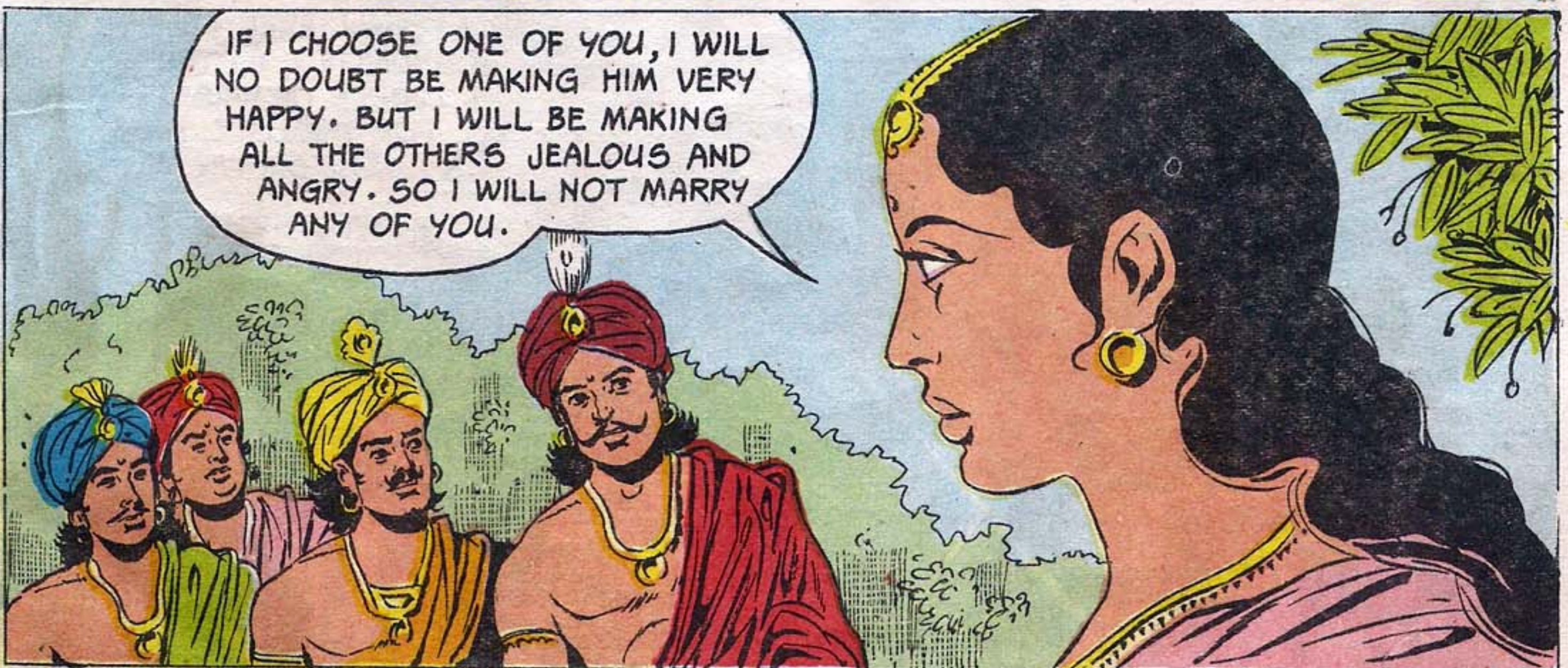
WE HAVE BEEN SELFISH, THOUGHTLESS!

YOU CHOOSE ONE AMONG US, AMRAPALI.

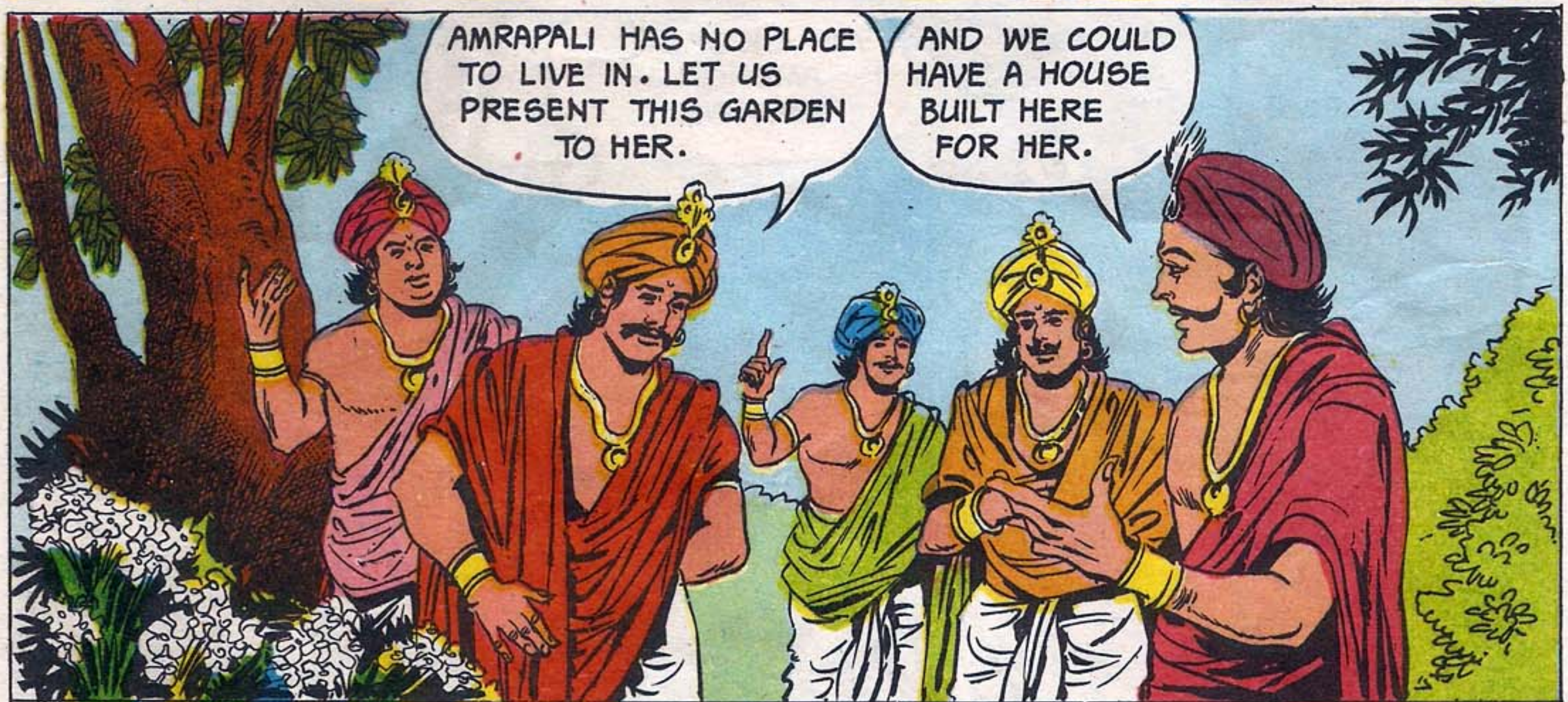
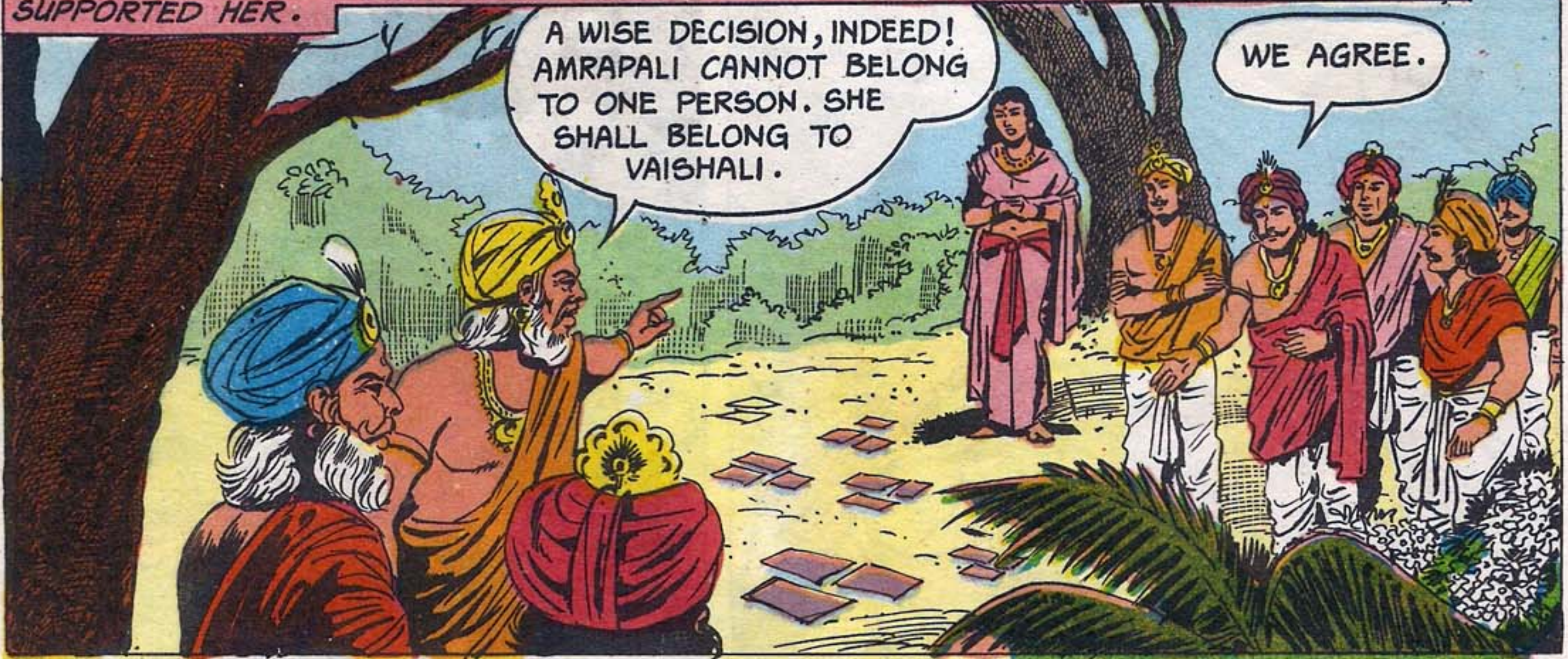
THE ONE YOU CHOOSE, SHALL MARRY YOU.



IF I CHOOSE ONE OF YOU, I WILL NO DOUBT BE MAKING HIM VERY HAPPY. BUT I WILL BE MAKING ALL THE OTHERS JEALOUS AND ANGRY. SO I WILL NOT MARRY ANY OF YOU.



THE ELDERS OF VAISHALI, WHO HAD HURRIED TO THE GARDEN ON HEARING THE CLASH, SUPPORTED HER.



TO ENTERTAIN THE NOBLES OF VAISHALI, AMRAPALI, AN EXCELLENT DANCER, BEGAN TO GIVE DANCE PERFORMANCES.



NO OTHER KINGDOM CAN BOAST OF SUCH AN ACCOMPLISHED DANCER!

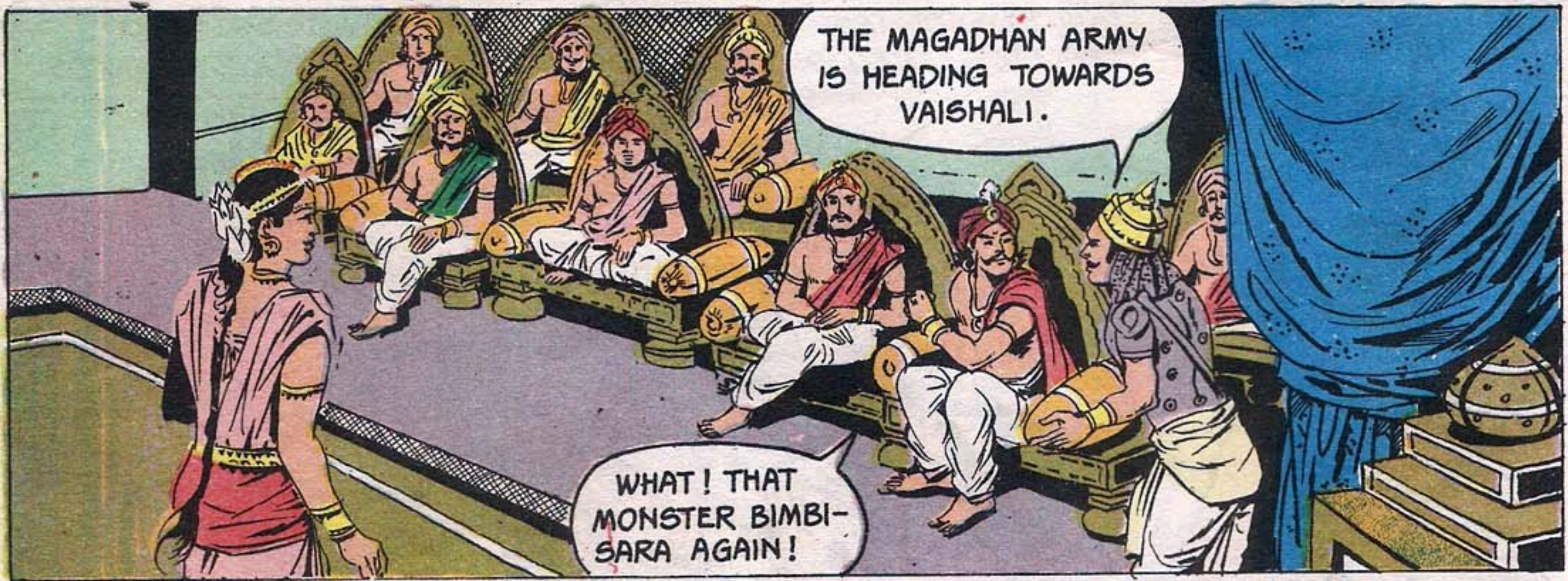
SHE IS INDEED, THE PRIDE OF VAISHALI!



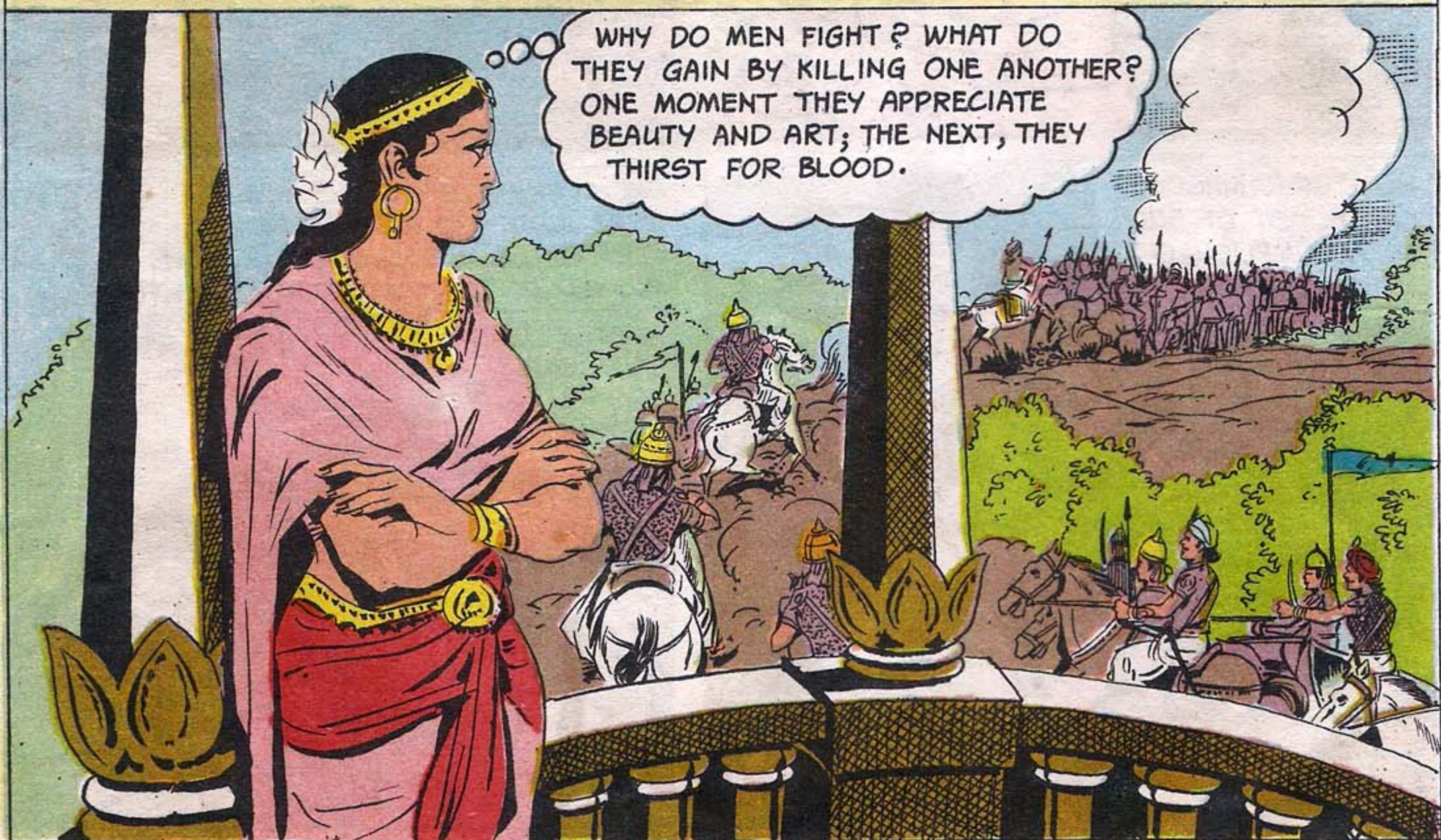
ONE EVENING, WHEN THE NOBLES WERE WATCHING AMRAPALI PERFORM, A MESSENGER RUSHED IN.

MASTER! I HAVE BAD NEWS! VAISHALI IS IN DANGER!

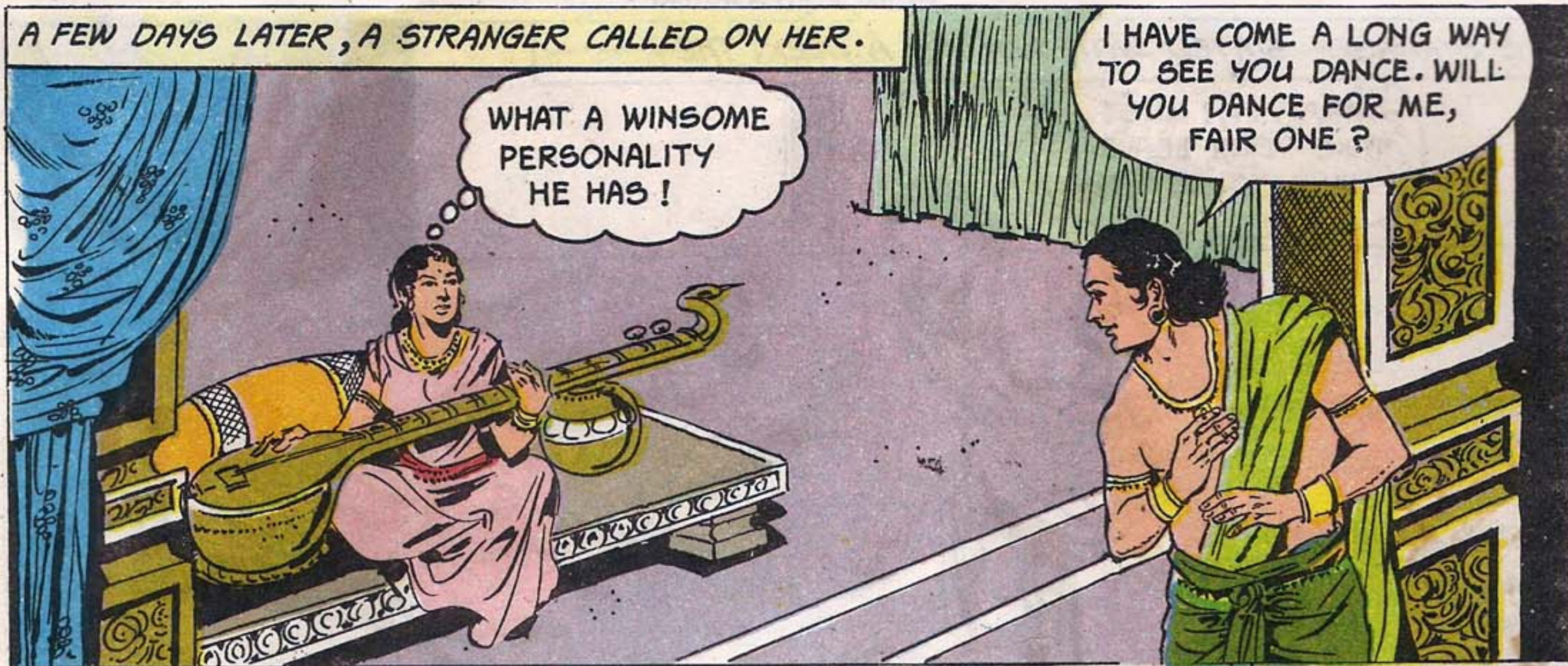




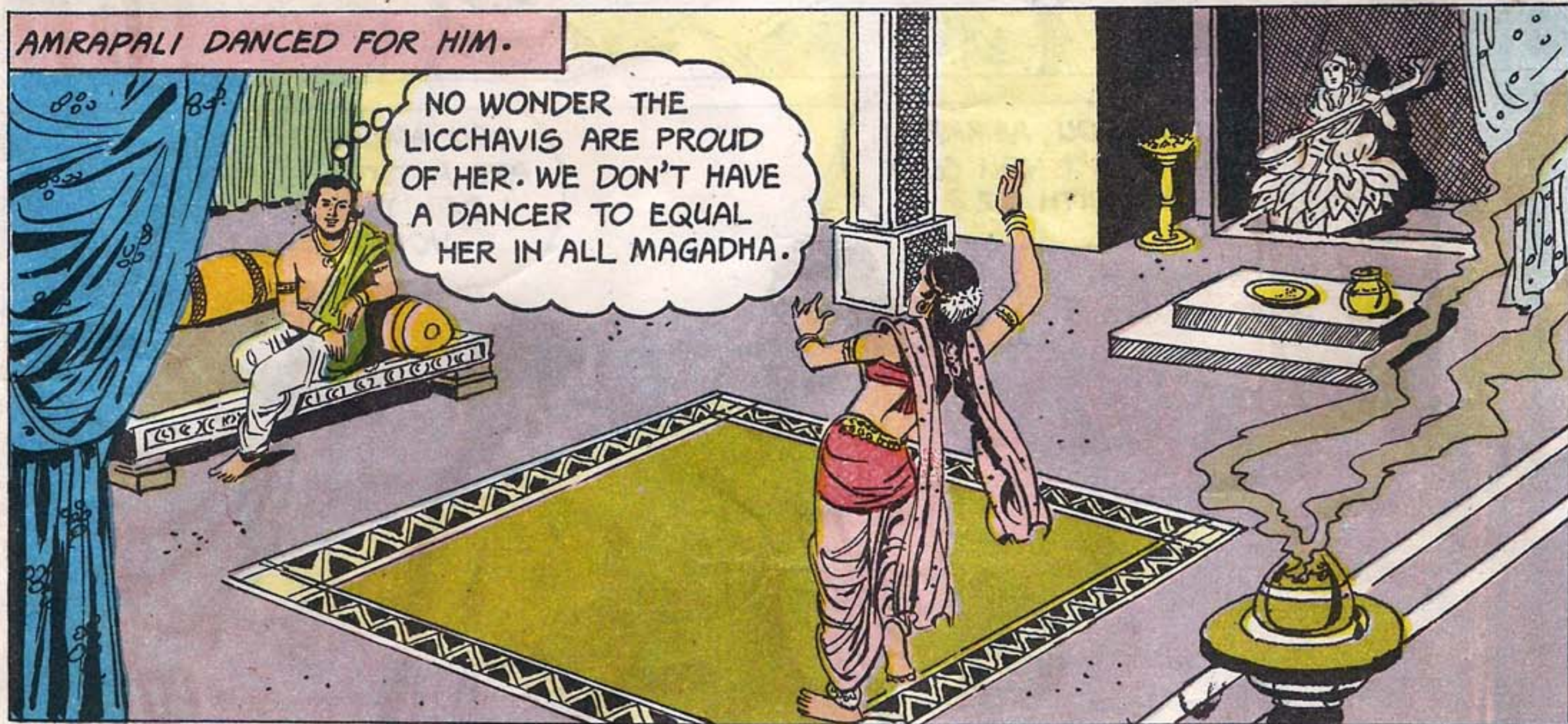
AS AMRAPALI WATCHED THE YOUNG MEN OF VAISHALI RIDE TO THE BATTLEFIELD —



A FEW DAYS LATER, A STRANGER CALLED ON HER.



AMRAPALI DANCED FOR HIM.



WHEN THE DANCE WAS OVER —



THEN YOU ARE WELCOME TO STAY AT MY HOUSE.

YOU ARE VERY GENEROUS, AMRAPALI.



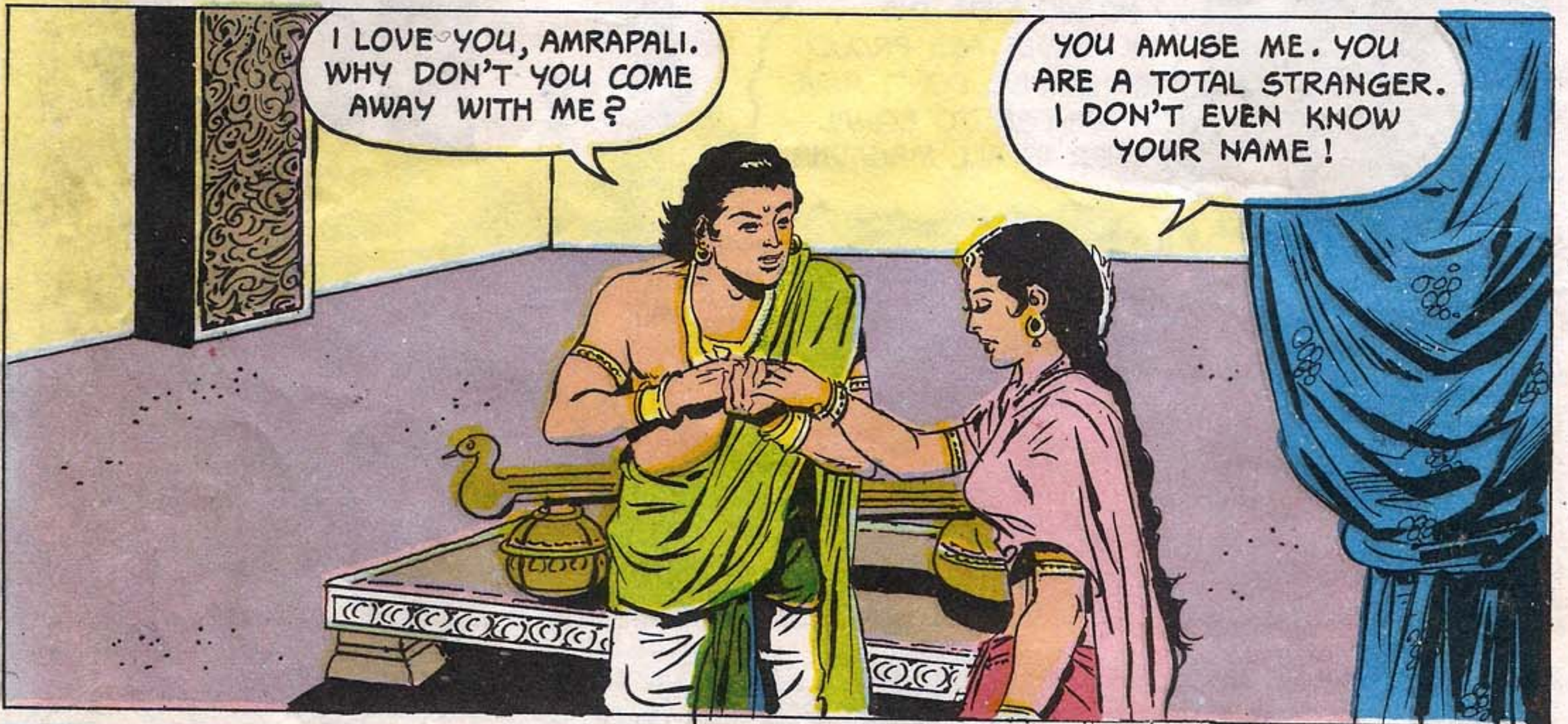
THE STRANGER STAYED WITH HER FOR A WEEK. THEN —

AMRAPALI, I MUST
TAKE YOUR LEAVE.
I HAVE TO GO BACK.



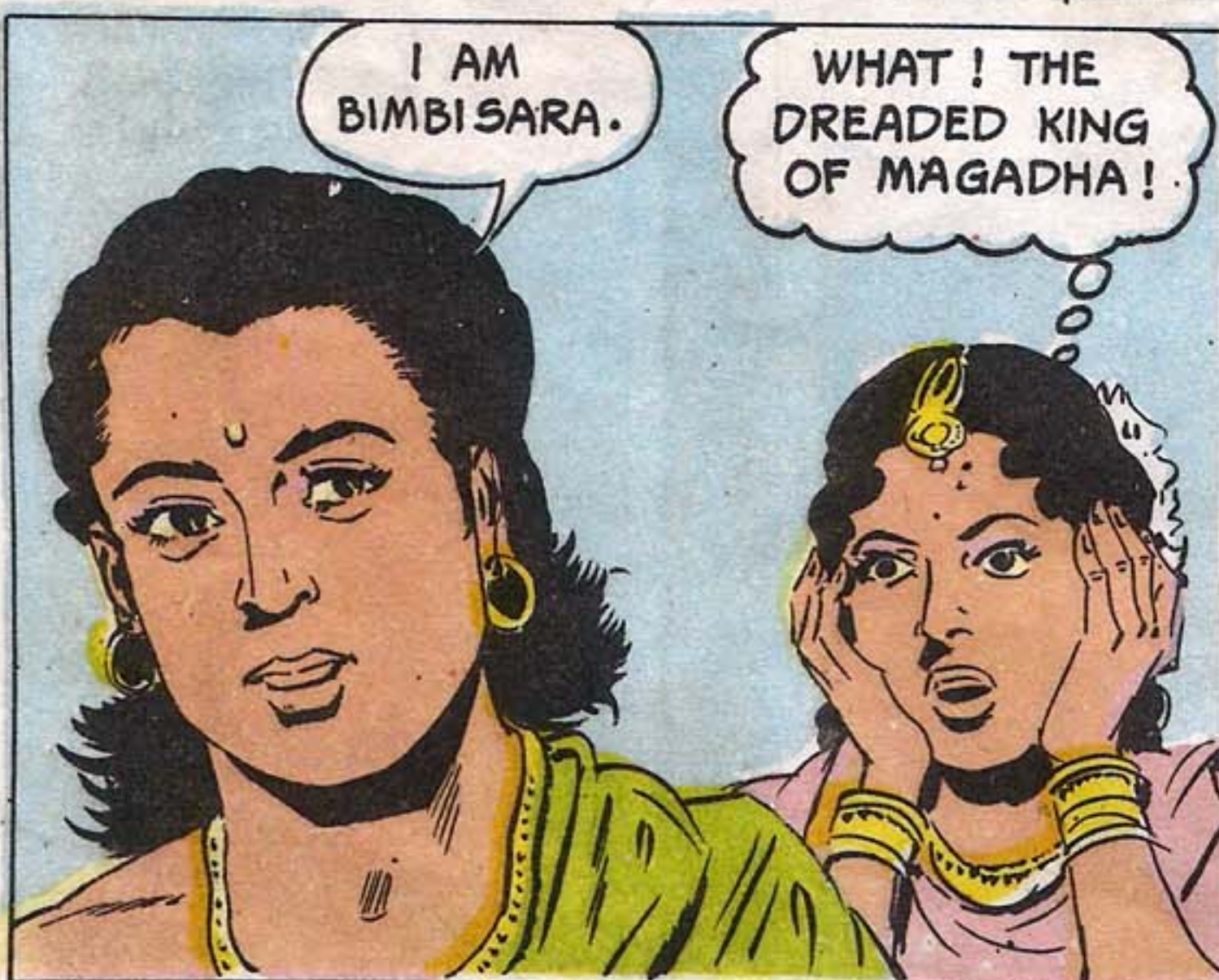
I LOVE YOU, AMRAPALI.
WHY DON'T YOU COME
AWAY WITH ME?

YOU AMUSE ME. YOU
ARE A TOTAL STRANGER.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW
YOUR NAME!

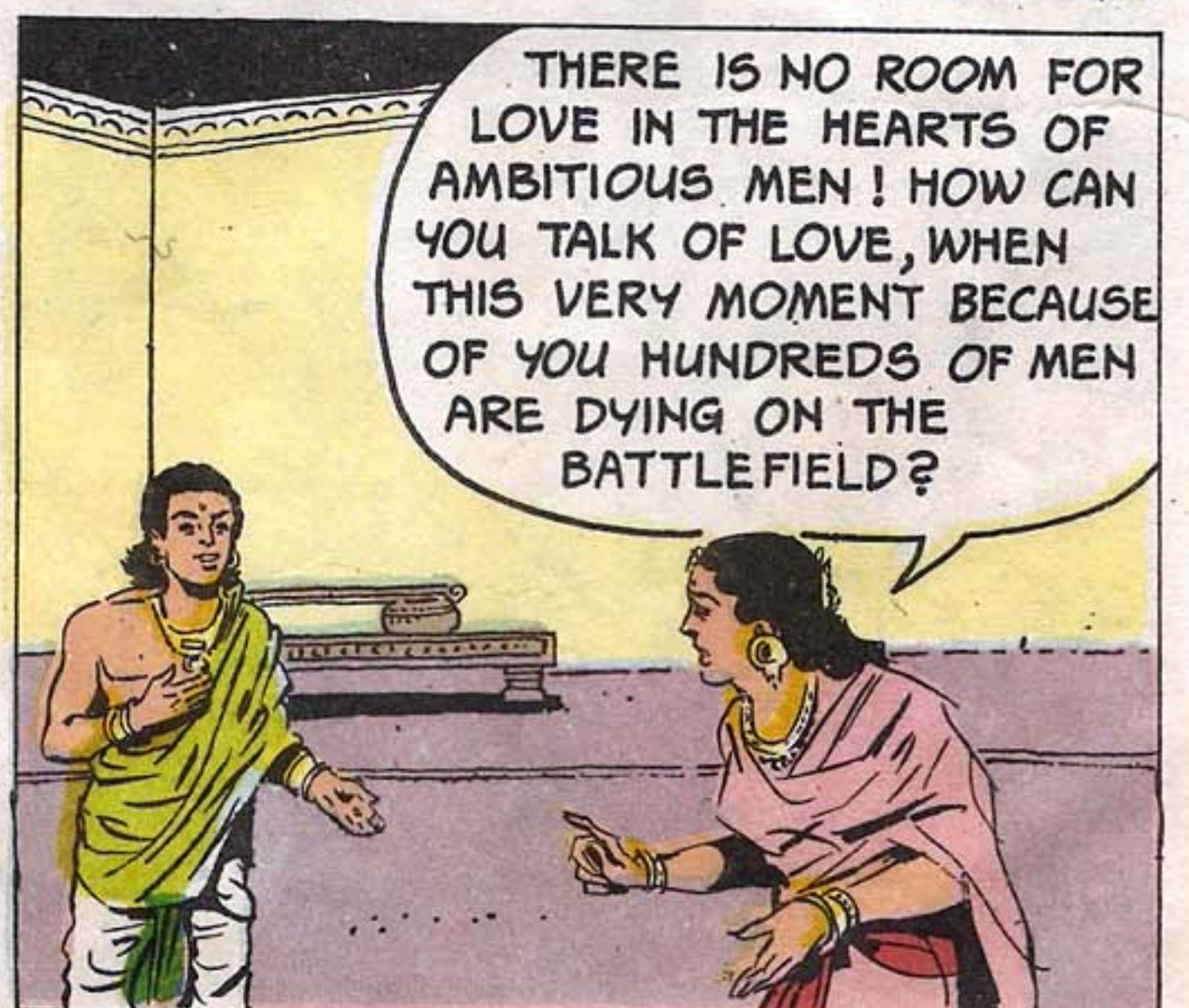


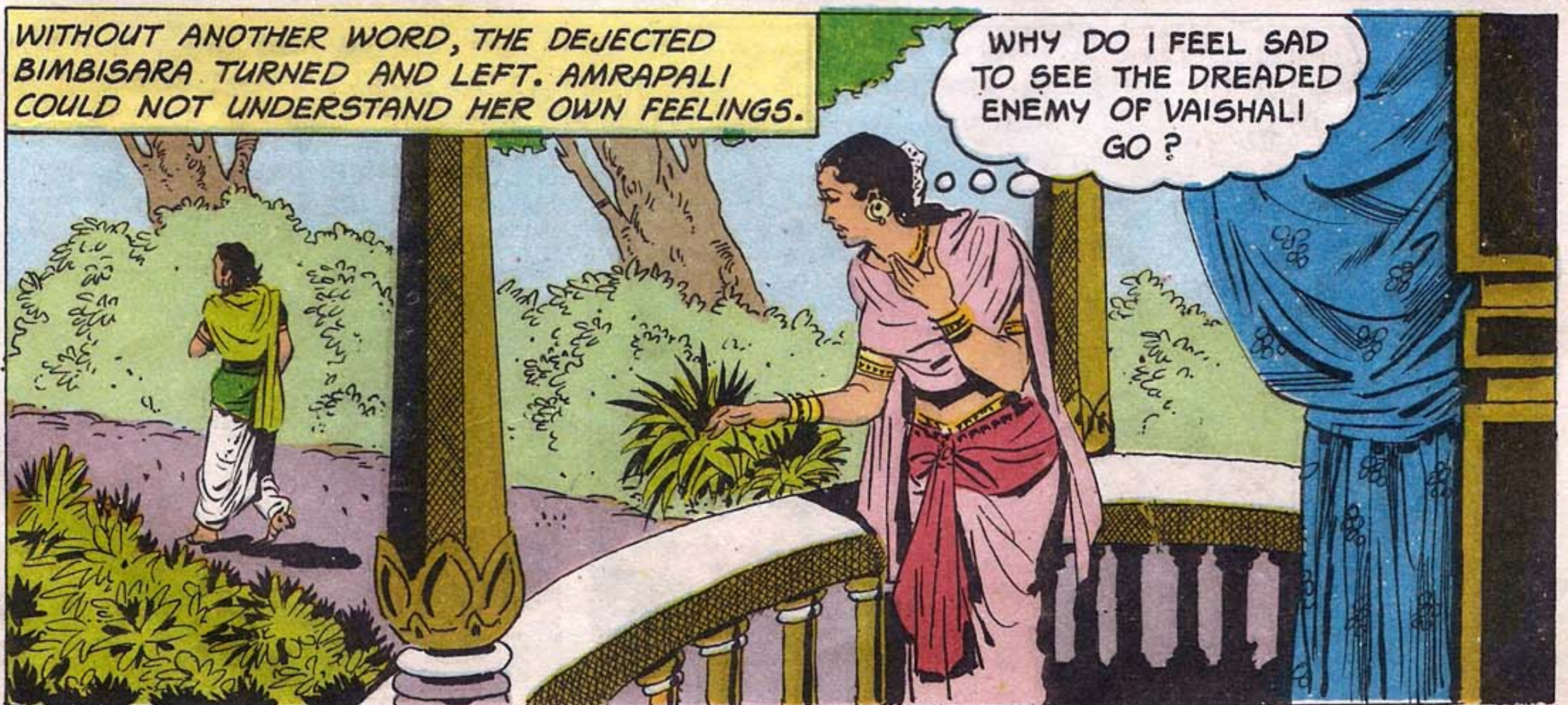
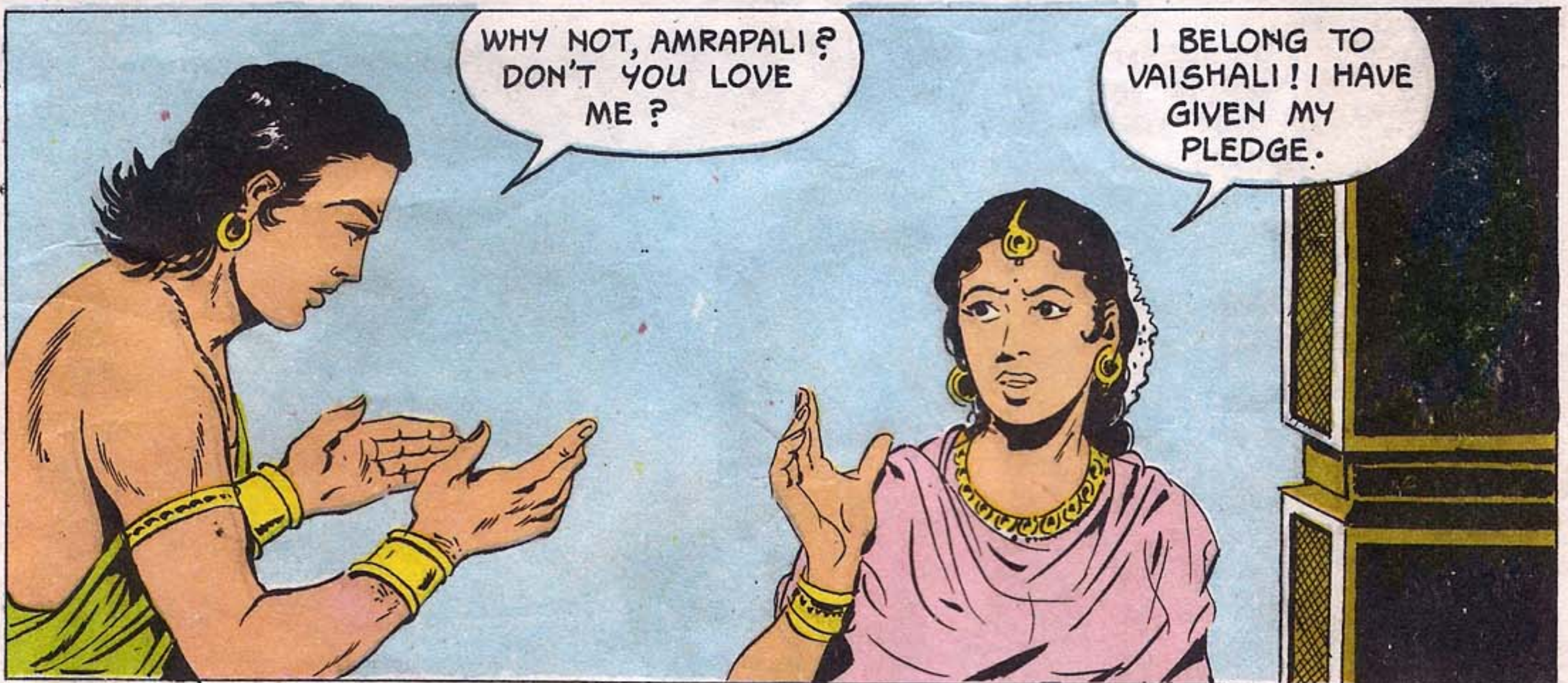
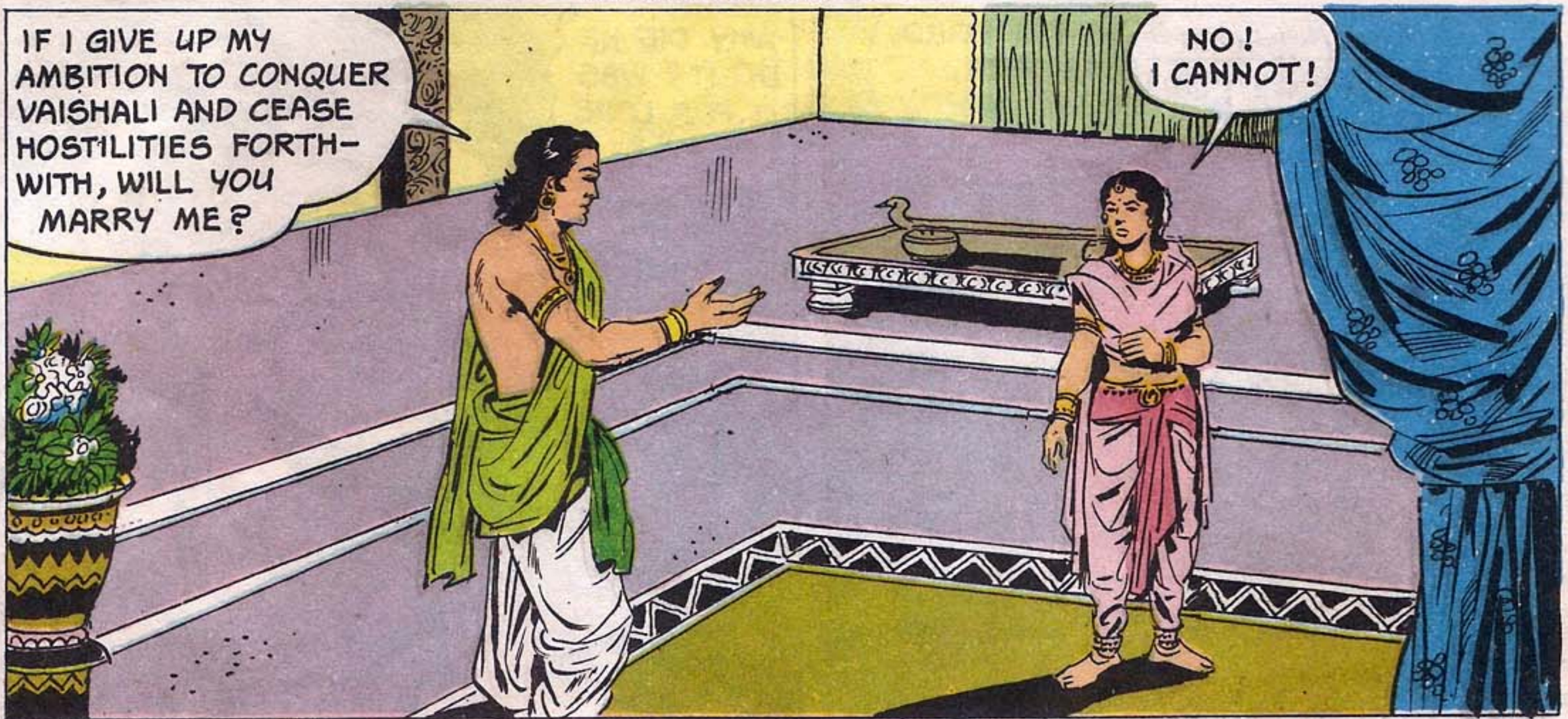
I AM
BIMBISARA.

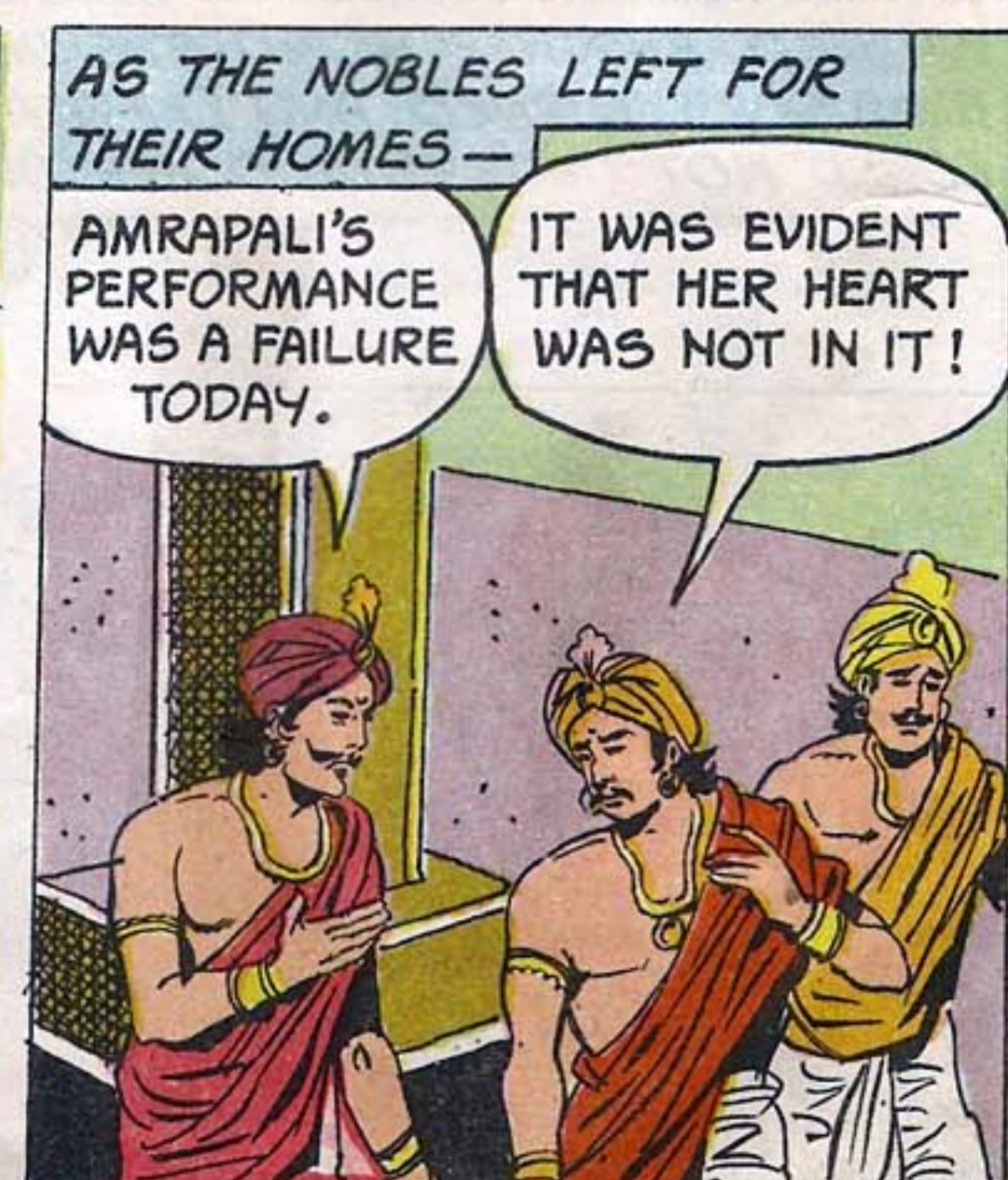
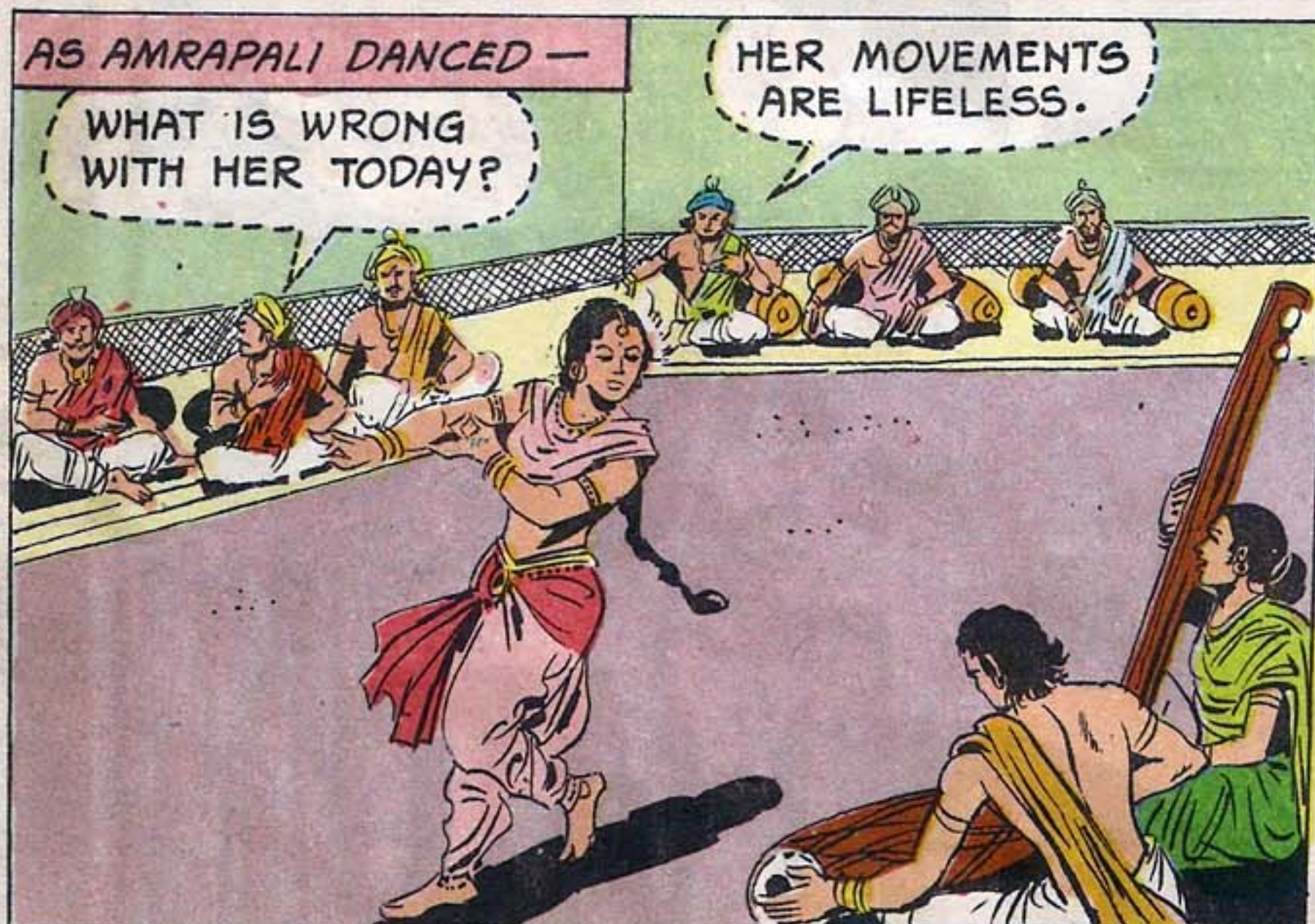
WHAT! THE
DREADED KING
OF MAGADHA!



THERE IS NO ROOM FOR
LOVE IN THE HEARTS OF
AMBITIOUS MEN! HOW CAN
YOU TALK OF LOVE, WHEN
THIS VERY MOMENT BECAUSE
OF YOU HUNDREDS OF MEN
ARE DYING ON THE
BATTLEFIELD?



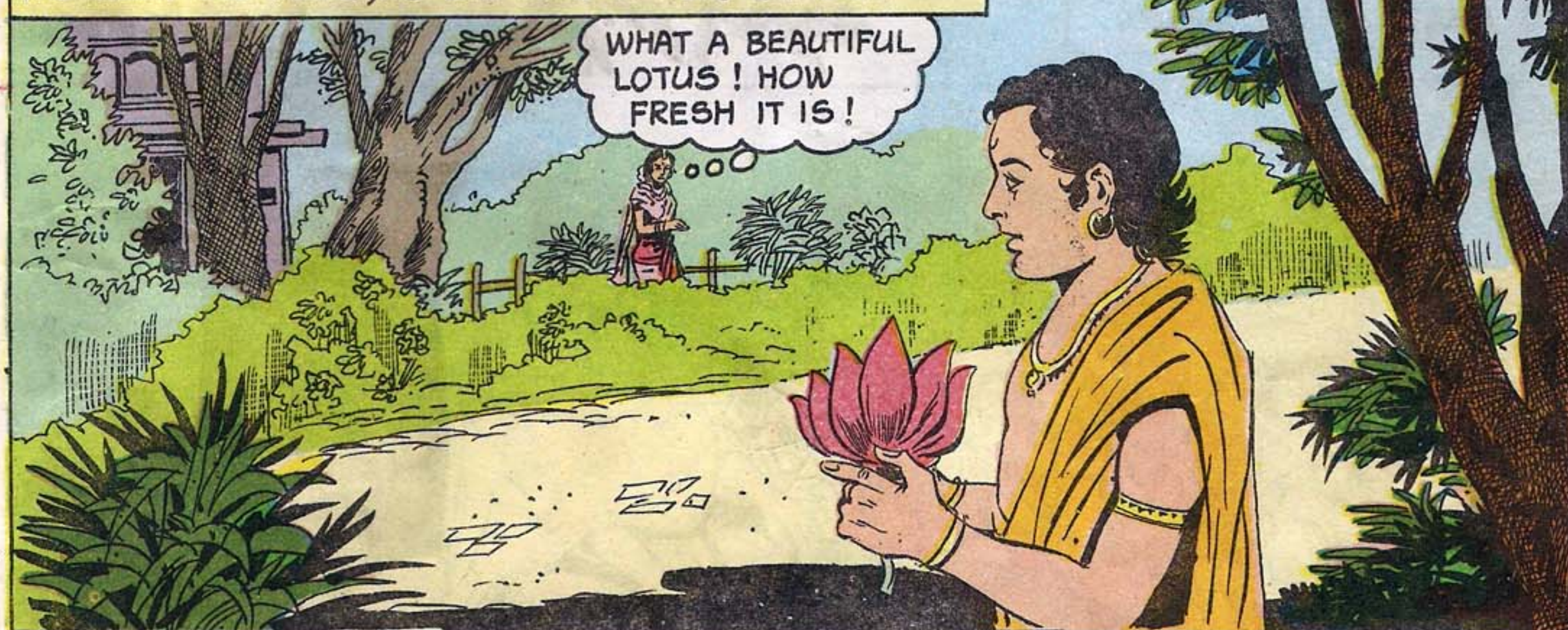


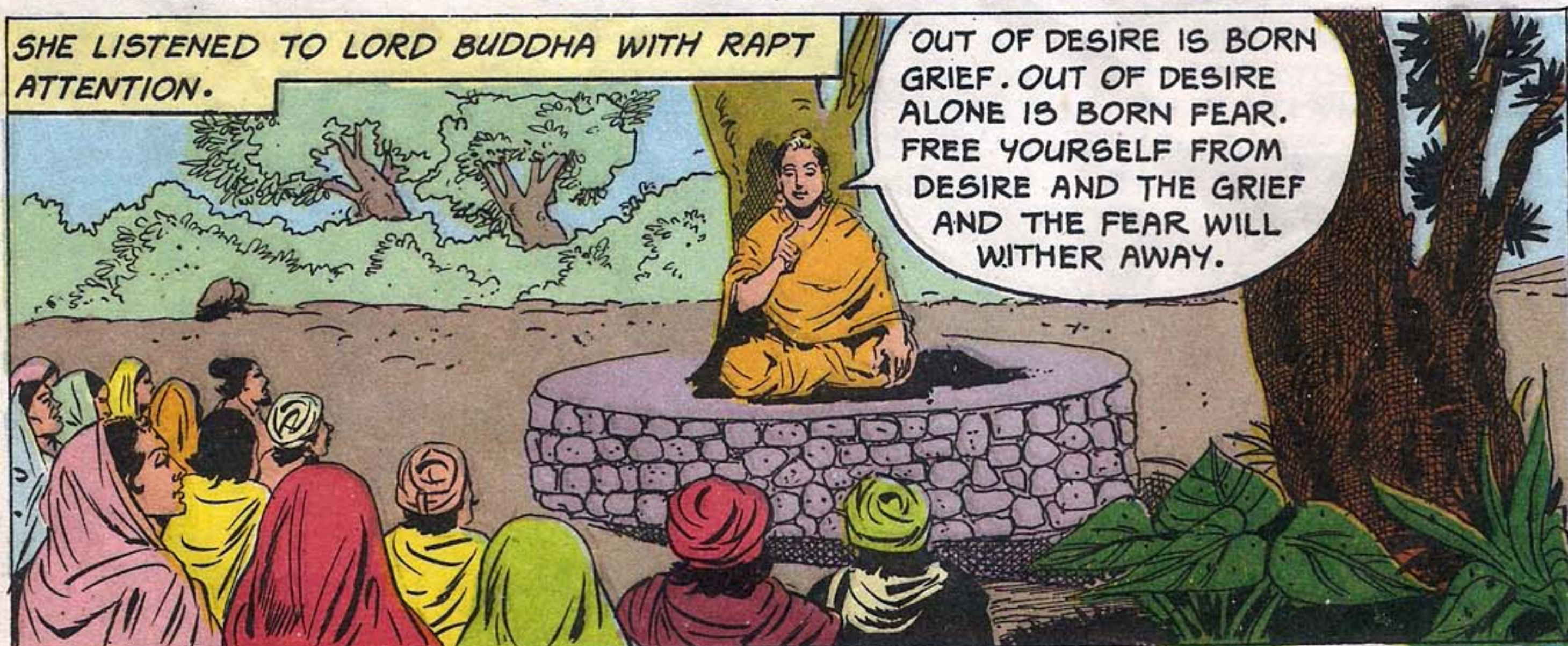
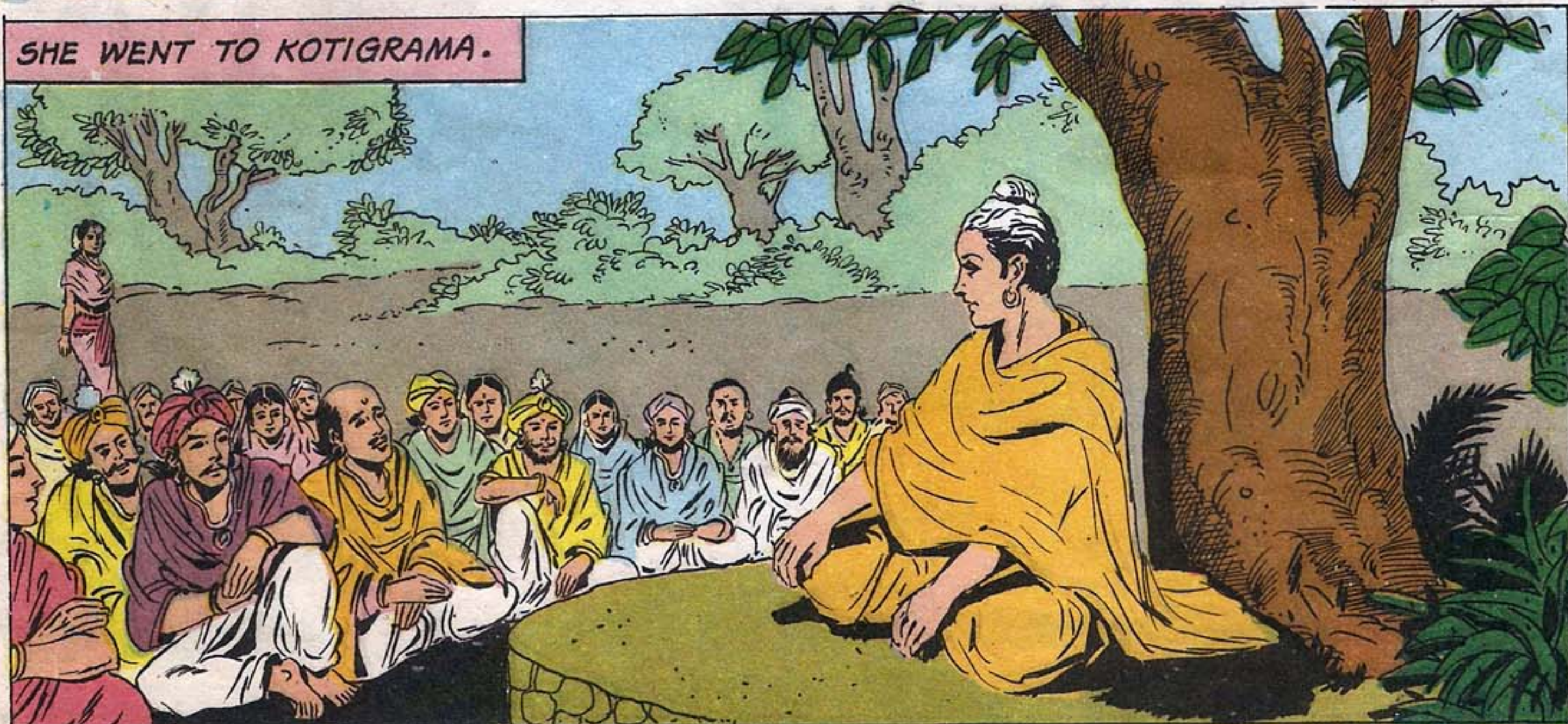


MEANWHILE, AMRAPALI SAT BROODING.

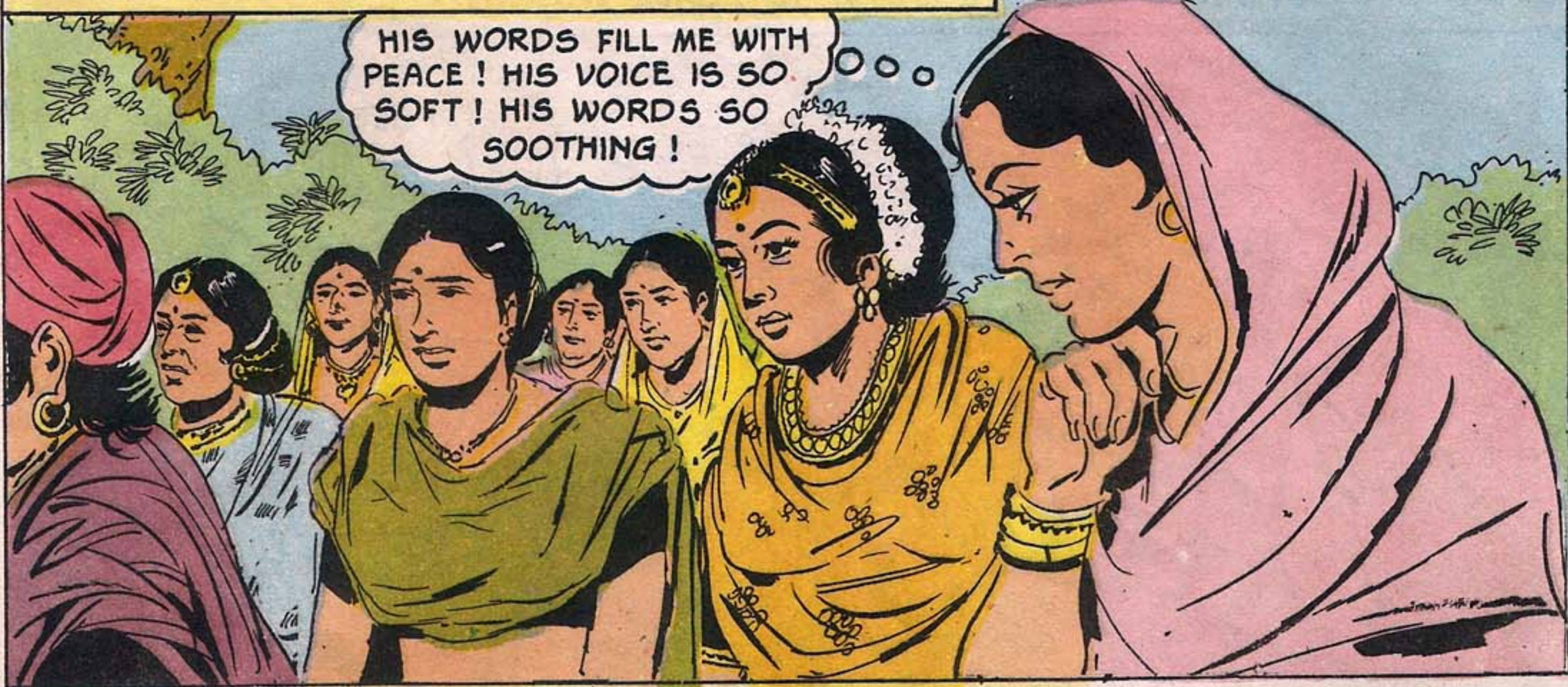


THE NEXT MORNING, AS SHE WAS IN HER GARDEN —





SHE BEGAN TO EXPERIENCE A NEW KIND OF JOY.



HIS WORDS FILL ME WITH
PEACE ! HIS VOICE IS SO
SOFT ! HIS WORDS SO
SOOTHING !

SHE WENT TO KOTIGRAMA DAILY. ONE DAY —

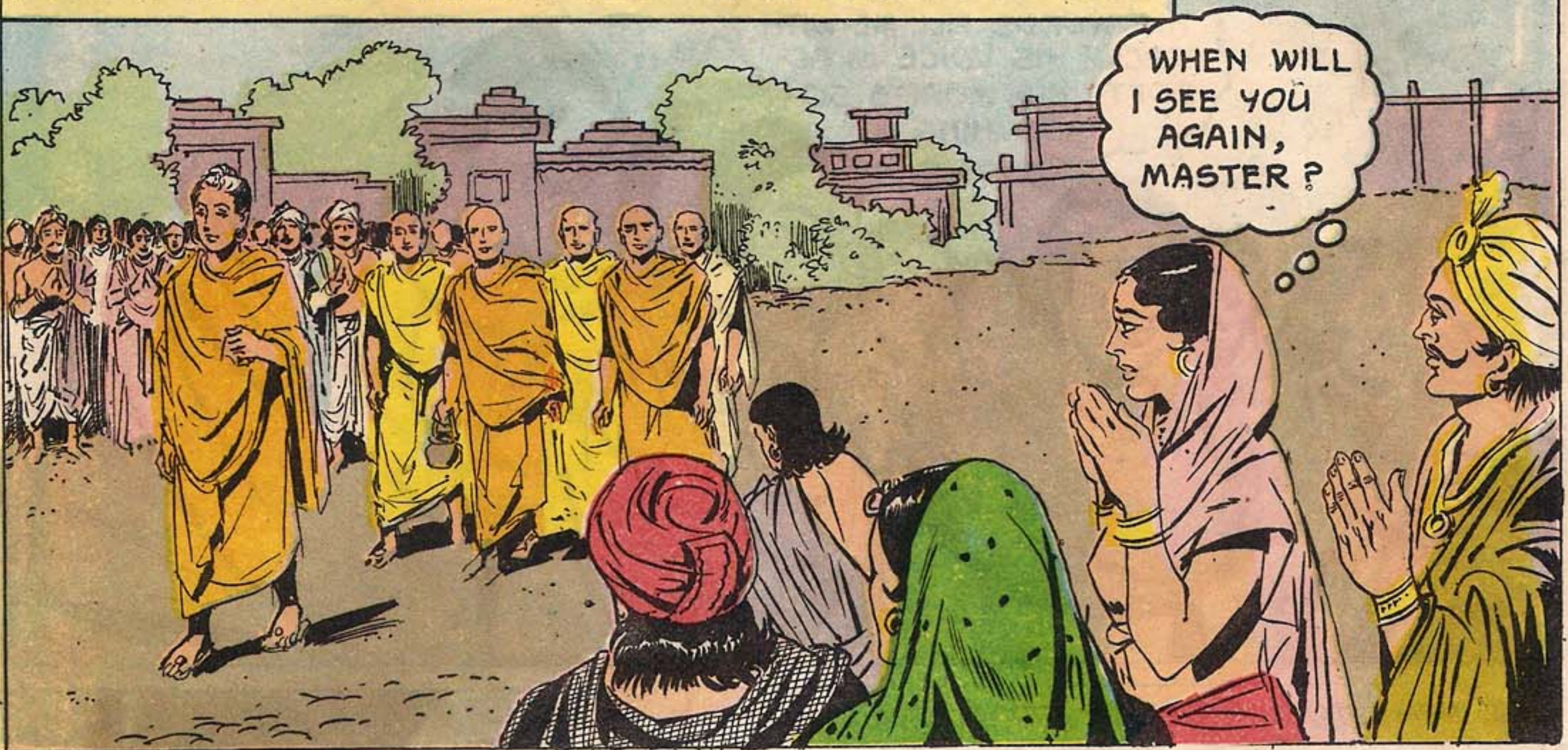


HIS VERY PRESENCE
STILLS MY RESTLESS
MIND. HOW I WISH HE
WOULD VISIT MY HOME
AND FILL IT WITH
HIS BEING !



BUT WILL THE LORD
VISIT THE HOUSE
OF AN UNWORTHY
PERSON LIKE ME ?

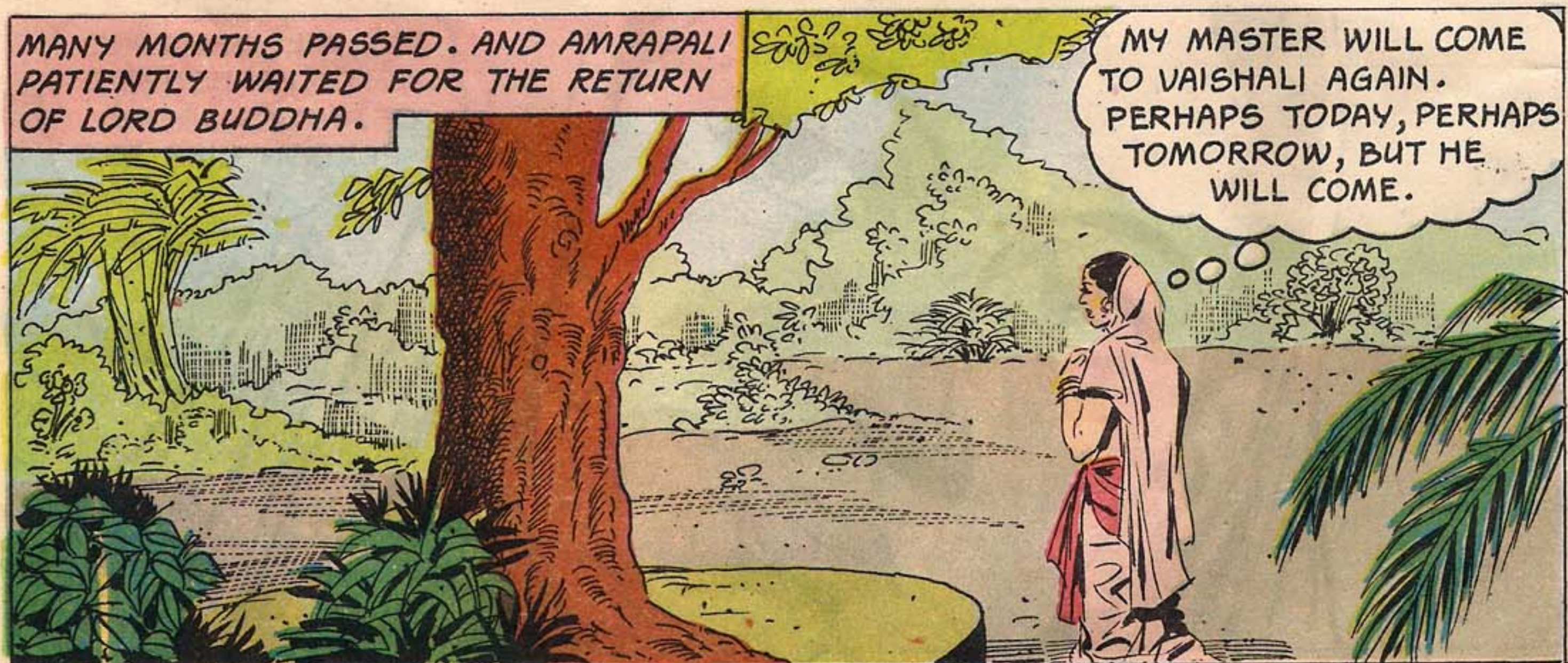
SOON IT WAS TIME FOR LORD BUDDHA TO LEAVE VAISHALI.

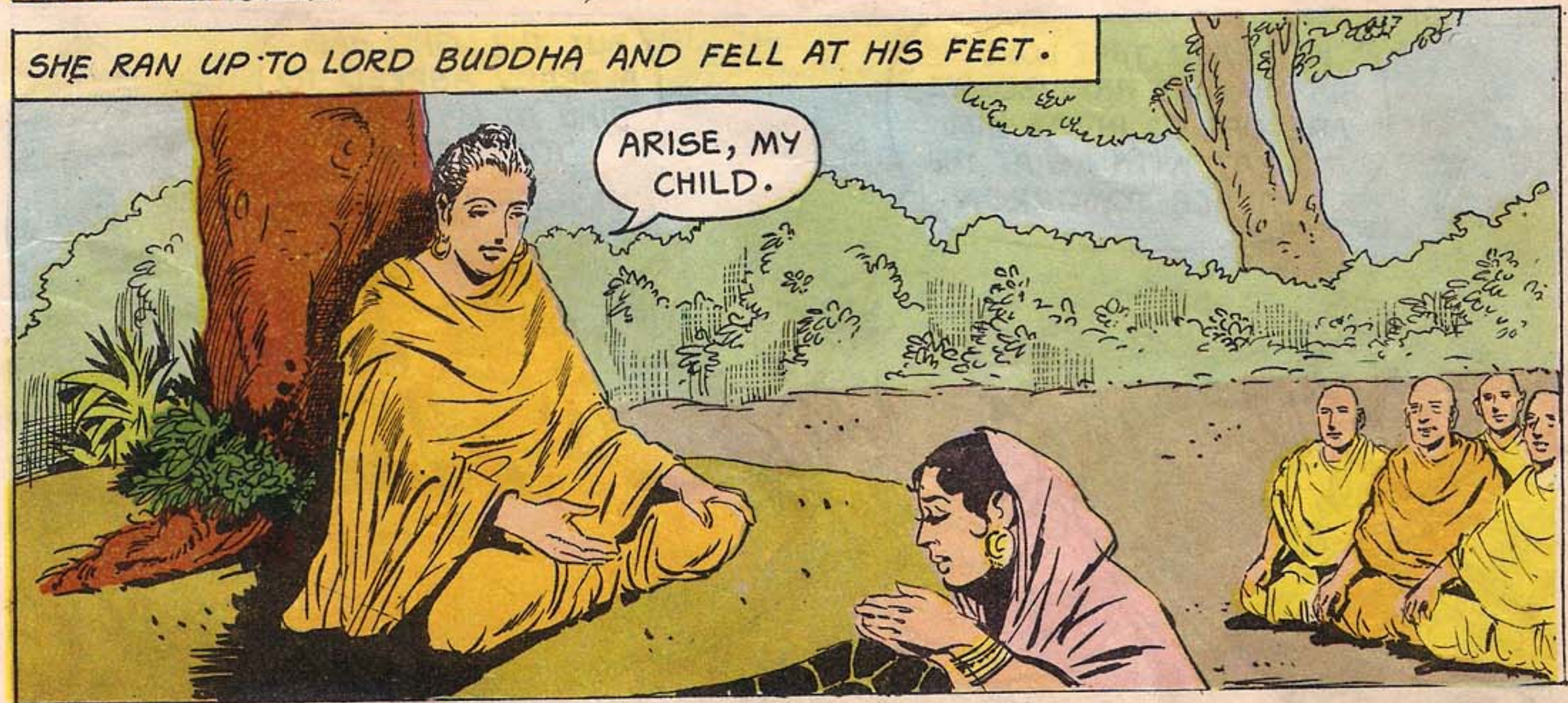
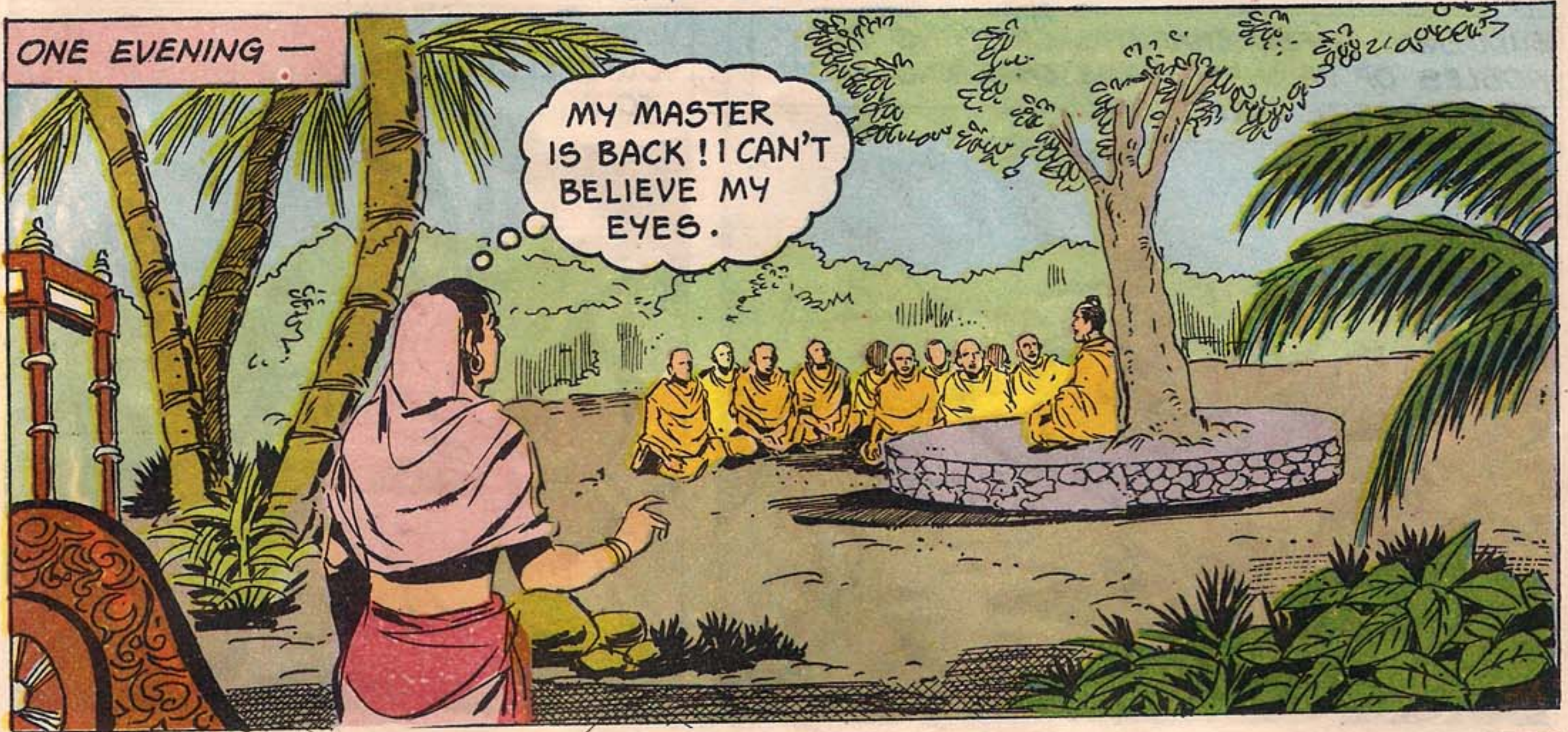


EVEN AFTER LORD BUDDHA HAD LEFT, AMRAPALI CONTINUED TO VISIT KOTIGRAMA EVERY EVENING.

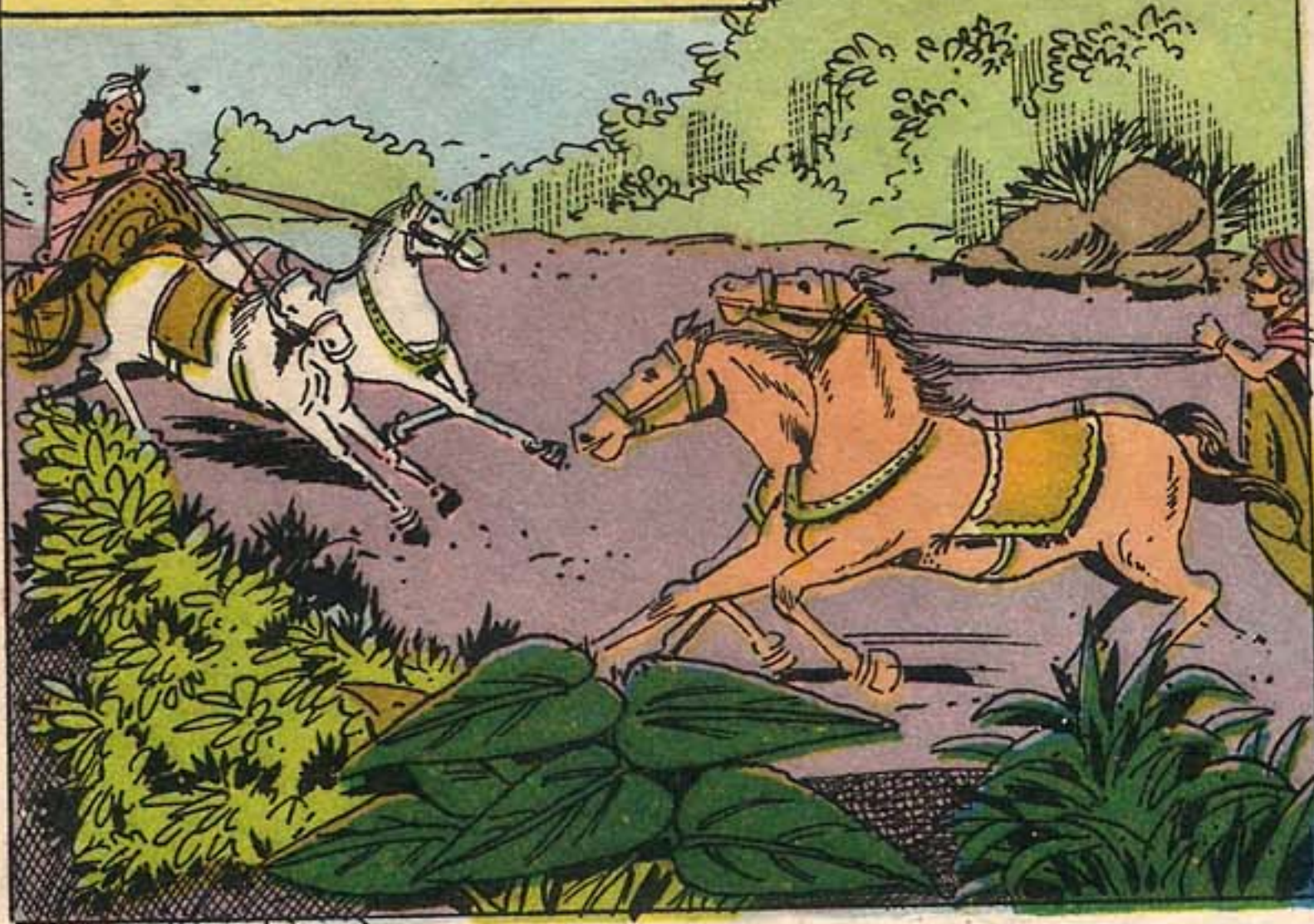


MANY MONTHS PASSED. AND AMRAPALI PATIENTLY WAITED FOR THE RETURN OF LORD BUDDHA.





SUDDENLY, A FEW CHARIOTS CARRYING THE NOBLES OF VAISHALI, CAME CHARGING FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.



WHERE ARE YOU SPEEDING TO?



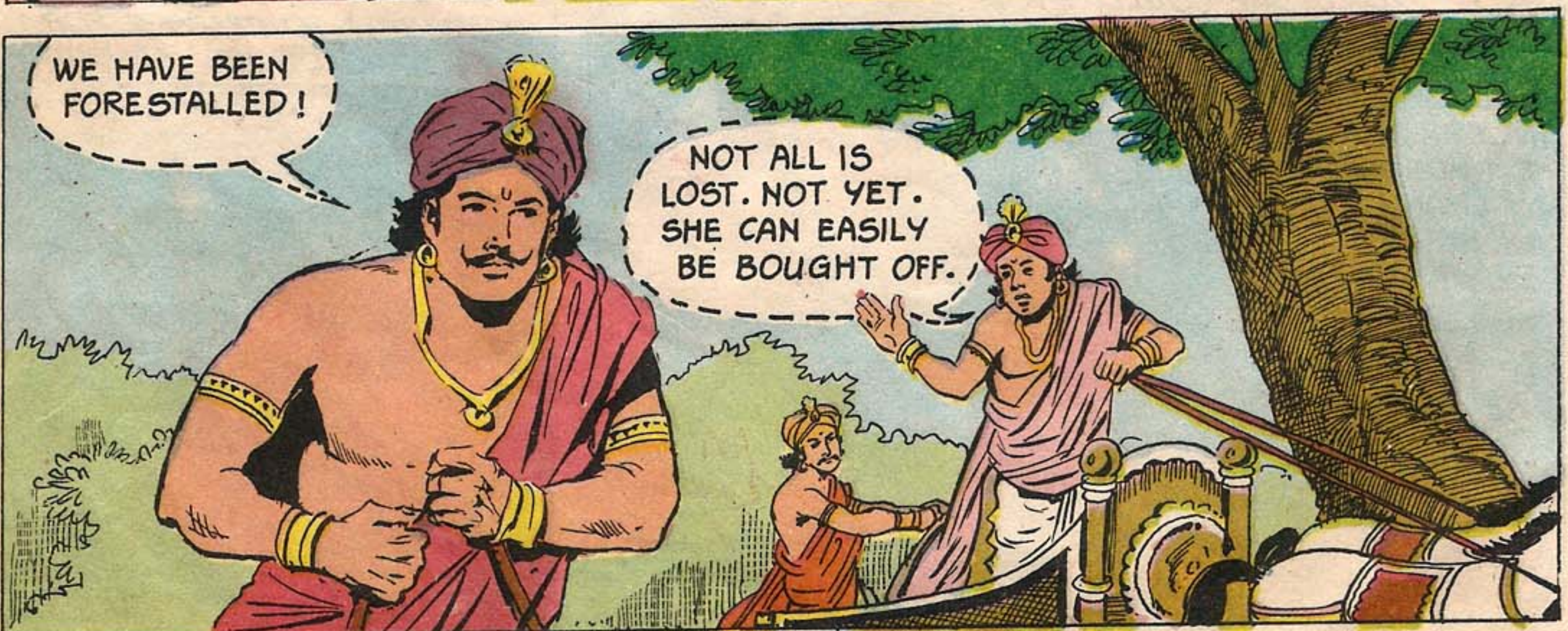
WE HEARD THAT LORD BUDDHA HAS ARRIVED. WE ARE OFF TO INVITE HIM TO EAT WITH US AT THE PALACE TOMORROW.

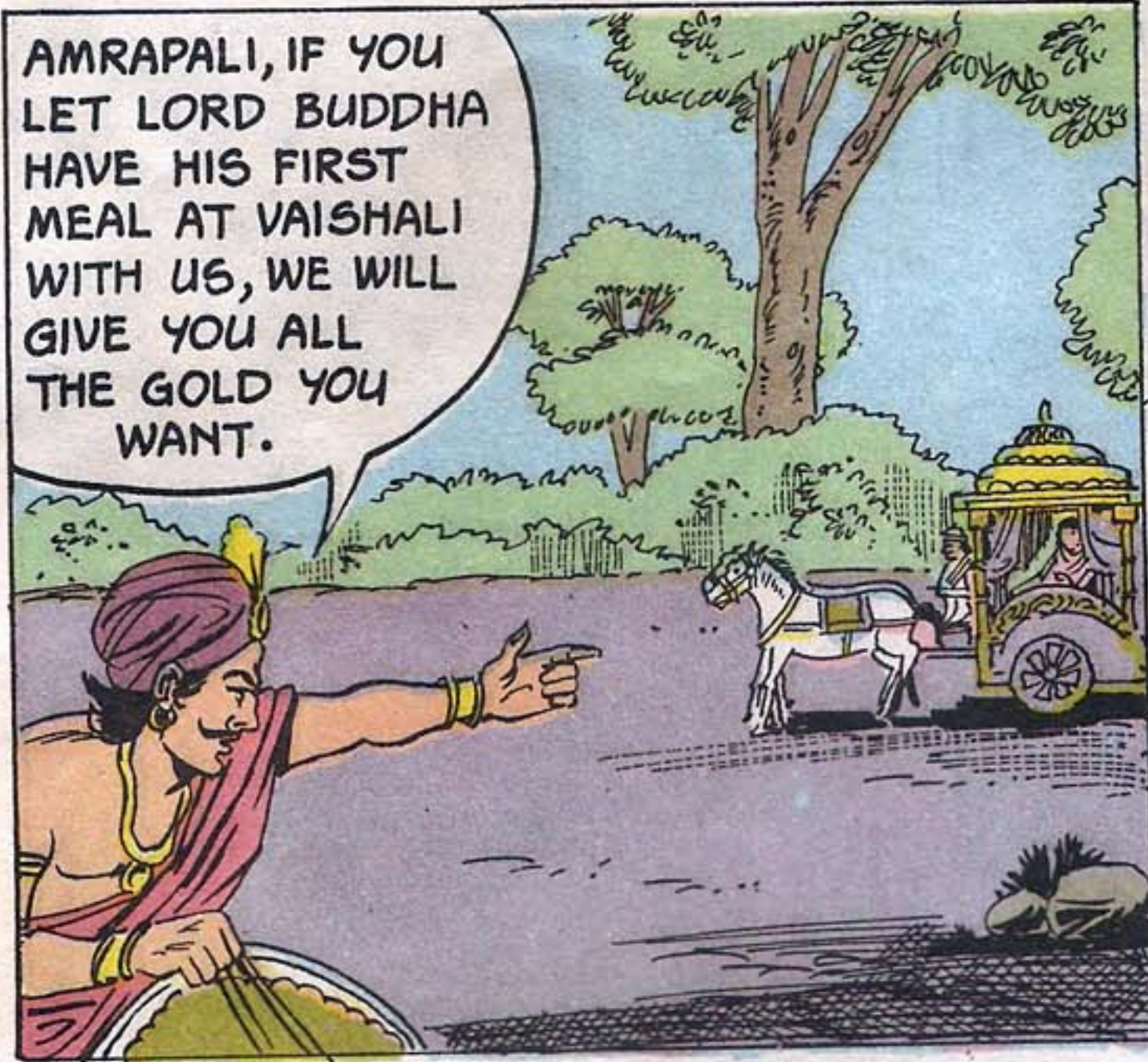
BUT THE LORD HAS ALREADY AGREED TO DINE AT MY HOUSE TOMORROW.



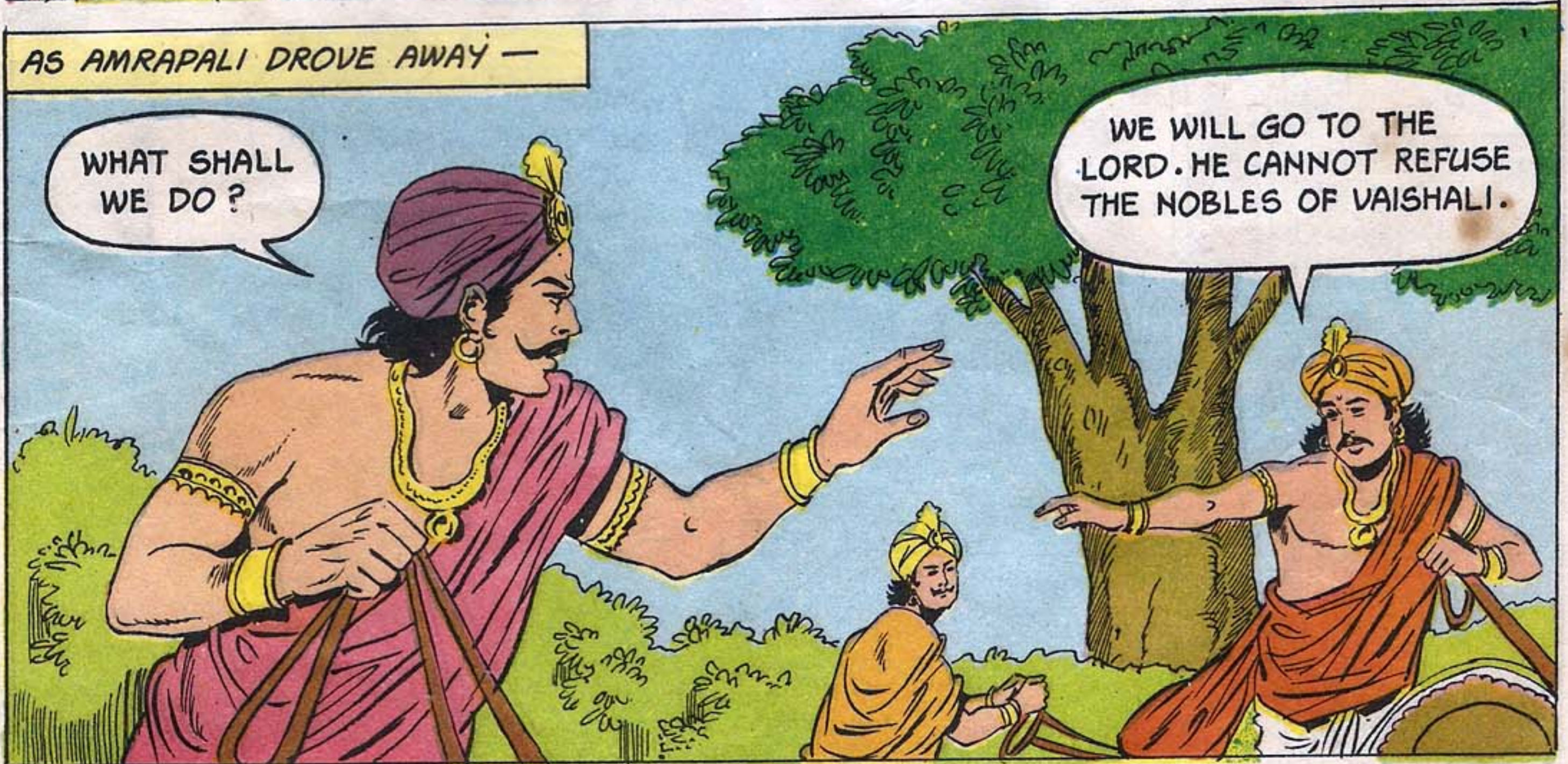
WE HAVE BEEN FORESTALLED!

NOT ALL IS LOST. NOT YET. SHE CAN EASILY BE BOUGHT OFF.

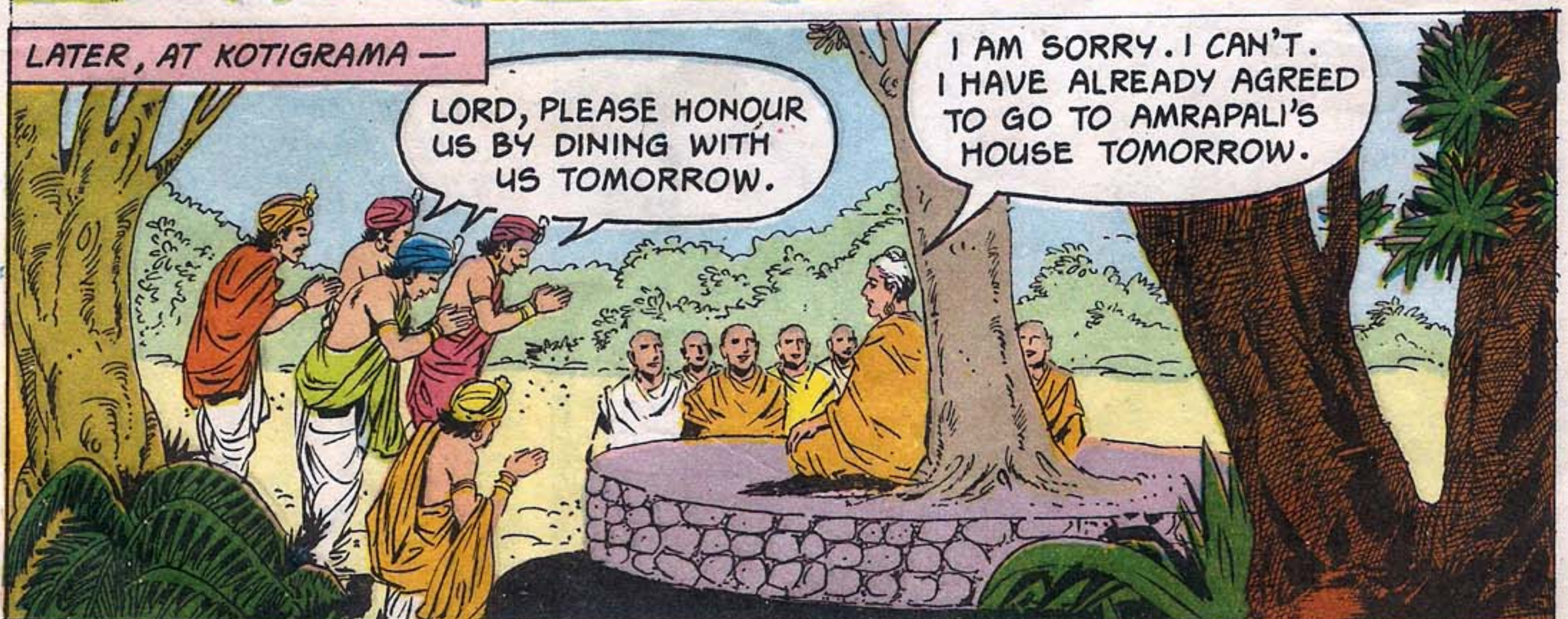




AS AMRAPALI DROVE AWAY —



LATER, AT KOTIGRAMA —



THE NEXT DAY, LORD BUDDHA WENT TO AMRAPALI'S HOUSE.

I HAVE COME, AMRAPALI.

LORD, YOU DO ME GREAT HONOUR.

LATER —

LORD, WHY DO I FEEL SUCH IMMENSE JOY AS I SERVE YOU?

AMRAPALI, YOU HAVE BEGUN TO KNOW THE JOY OF GIVING.

LATER —

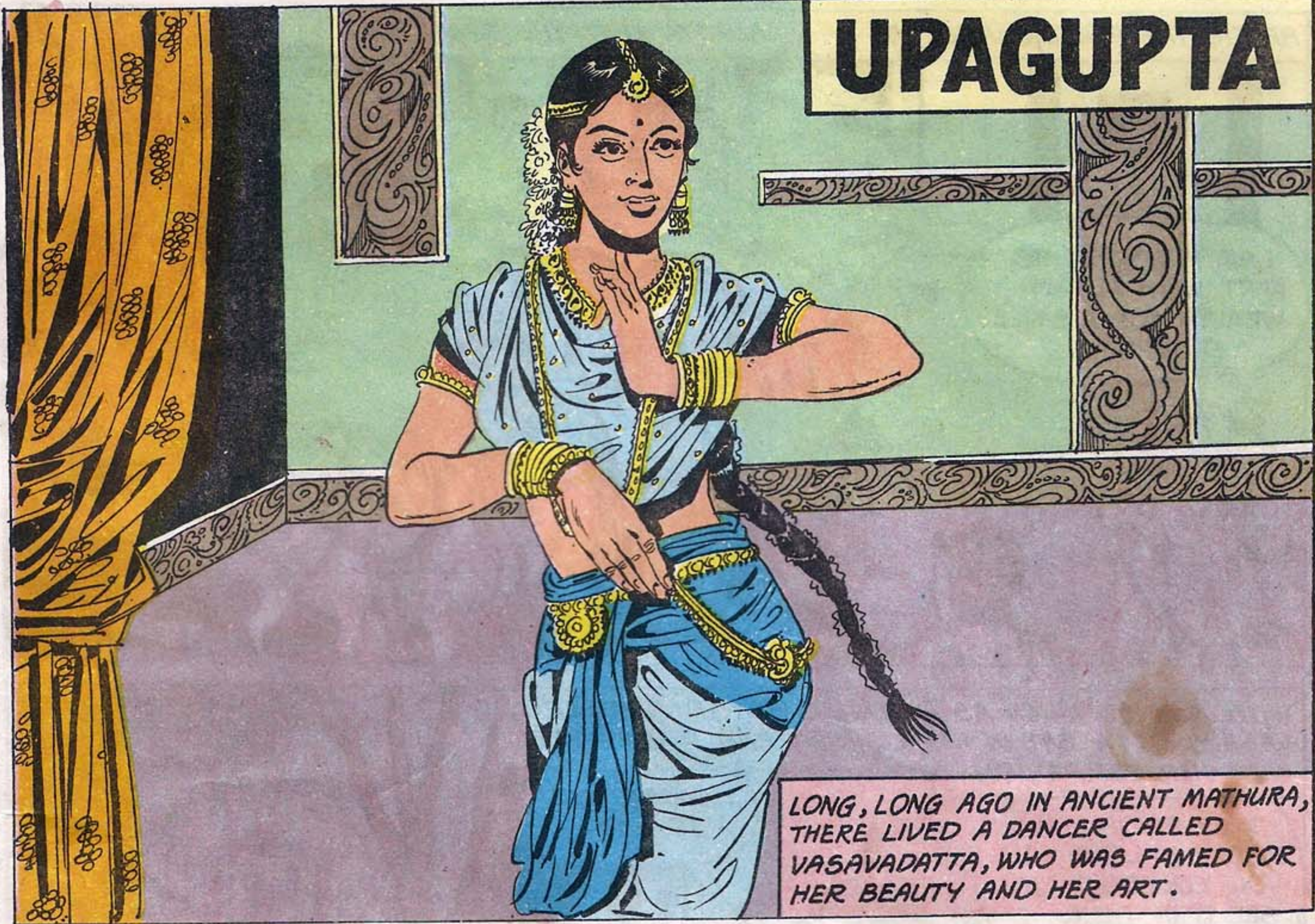
LORD, PERMIT ME TO GRANT MY GARDEN AND HOUSE TO THE SANGHA.

SO BE IT, CHILD. IT COULD BE USED AS A MONASTERY.

THEN, LEAVING BEHIND HER THE WORLDLY LIFE AND ITS HEARTACHES...

...AMRAPALI BEGAN TO LEAD A LIFE OF RENUNCIATION, FINDING AT LAST THE PEACE OF MIND SHE HAD CRAVED.

UPAGUPTA



LONG, LONG AGO IN ANCIENT MATHURA, THERE LIVED A DANCER CALLED VASAVADATTA, WHO WAS FAMED FOR HER BEAUTY AND HER ART.



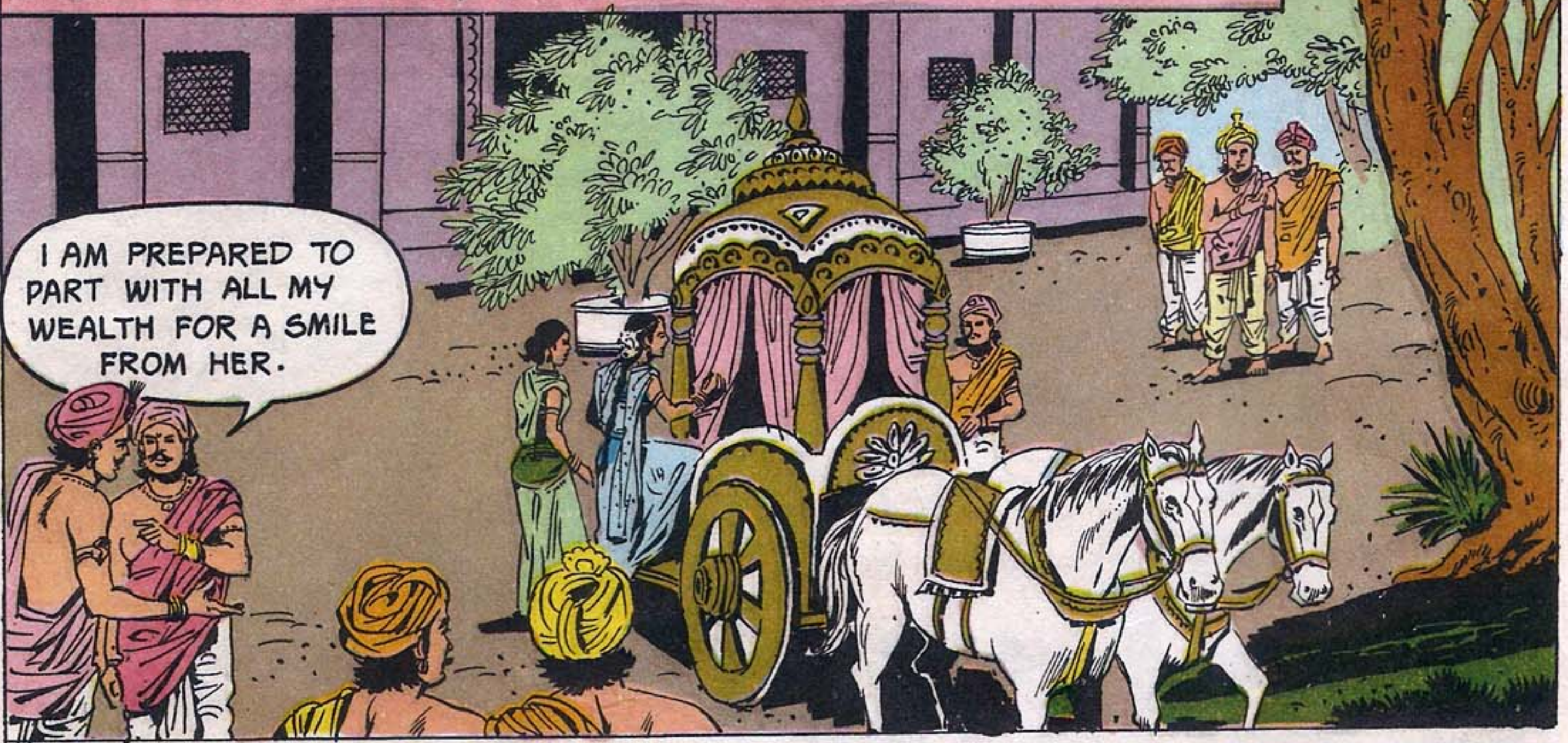
WHAT A PERFECT FIGURE! WHAT A CHARMING APPEARANCE! WHAT GRACEFUL MOVEMENTS...



... AND WHAT A HARD HEART! SHE'S UNIQUE, INDEED!

YOU SEEM BITTER. HAVE YOU TOO BEEN SPURNED BY HER?

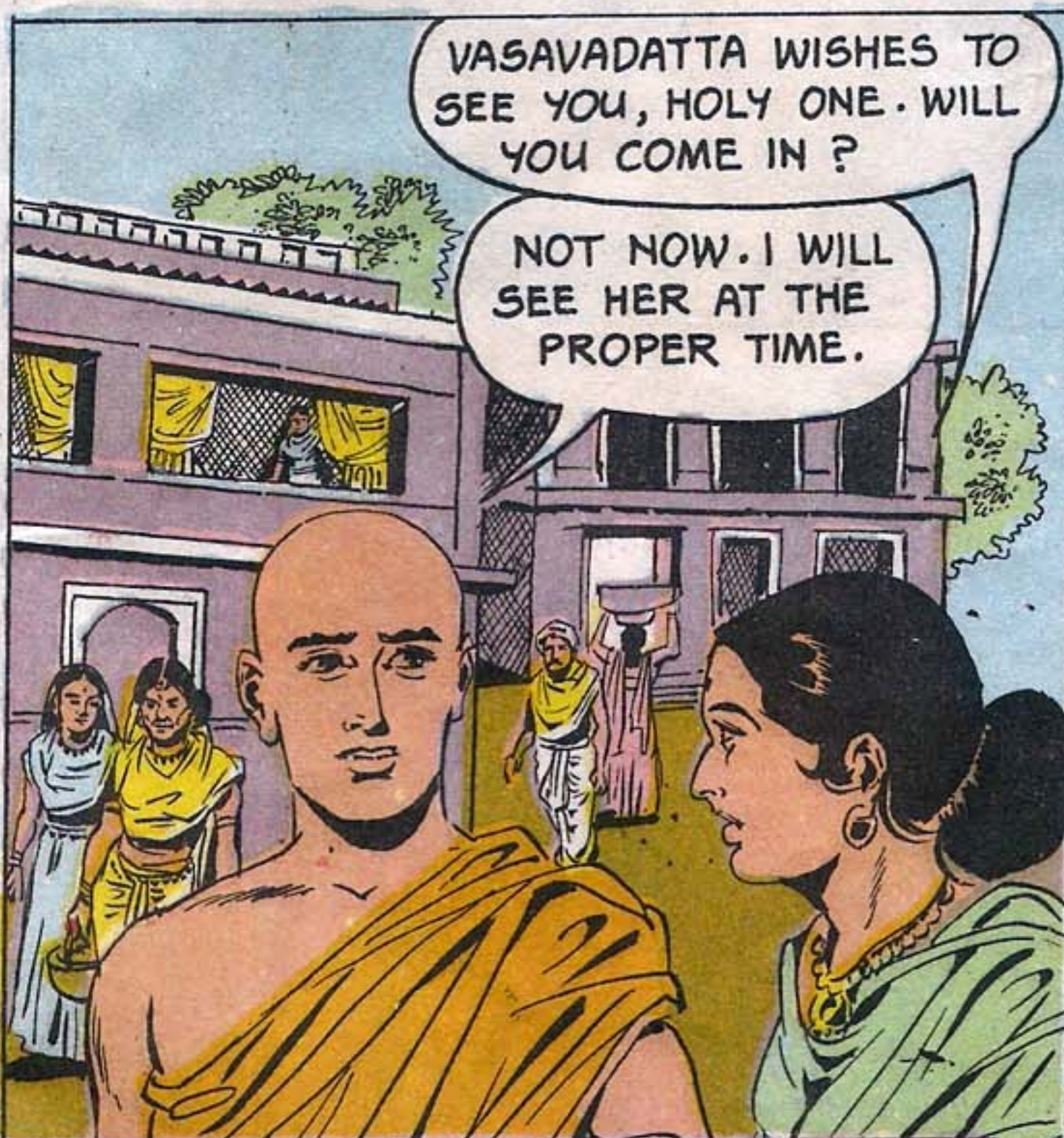
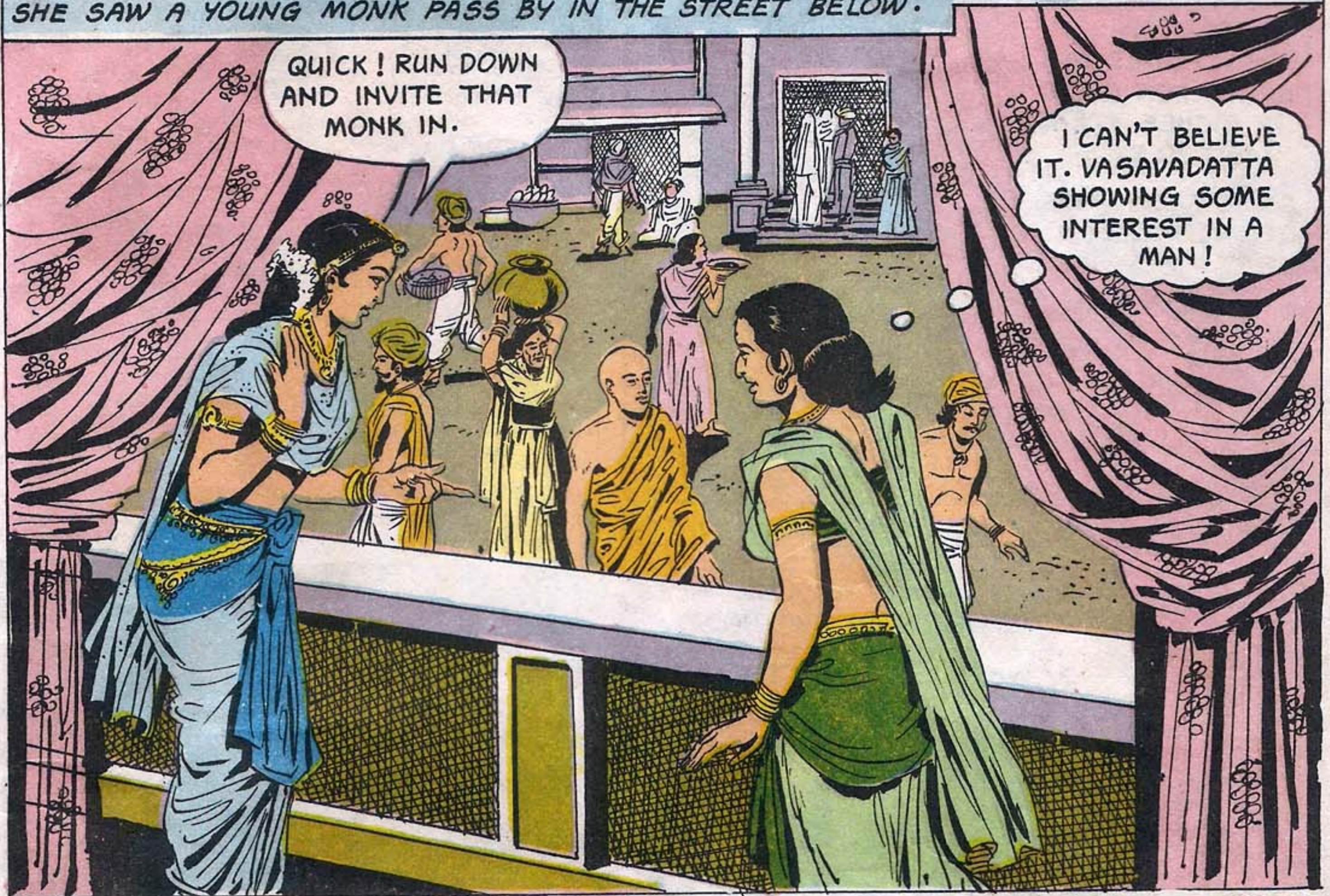
AFTER THE PERFORMANCE, AS VASAVADATTA LEFT THE TOWN HALL —



WITH NOT SO MUCH AS A GLANCE AT HER ADMIRERS, VASAVADATTA SAT IN HER CHARIOT AND RODE HOME WITH HER COMPANION.



ONE EVENING, AS VASAVADATTA WAS STANDING IN THE BALCONY OF HER MANSION, SHE SAW A YOUNG MONK PASS BY IN THE STREET BELOW.



WHEN VASAVADATTA WAS TOLD OF THE MONK'S REACTION —

PERHAPS, HE HESITATES TO VISIT ME BECAUSE HE IS POOR AND CAN'T BRING ME GIFTS. TELL HIM I DON'T WANT ANYTHING FROM HIM.



THE MONK WHO SPURNED THE INVITATION OF THE DANCER, WAS UPAGUPTA, A DISCIPLE OF LORD BUDDHA.

HER FRIEND WENT BACK TO UPAGUPTA.

O MONK, MY FRIEND DOES NOT CRAVE FOR GIFTS OR RICHES. PLEASE VISIT HER.

NO, I CANNOT. IT IS NOT YET TIME TO VISIT VASAVADATTA.

AND UPAGUPTA WALKED AWAY.

VASAVADATTA WAS STUNNED.

WHY SHOULD THE ONLY MAN I CHOOSE TO LOVE, SHUN ME?

SHE STOPPED GIVING DANCE PERFORMANCES, MUCH TO THE ANNOYANCE OF THE PEOPLE OF MATHURA.

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH VASAVADATTA?

LIFE IN MATHURA HAS LOST ITS CHARM. HOW COULD SHE BE SO CRUEL TO US!

MEANWHILE, HER FRIEND WAS WORRIED.

SHE SITS ALONE, BROODING OVER THAT HEARTLESS MONK. IT IS NOT GOOD FOR HER HEALTH AND LOOKS. I MUST FIND SOMETHING TO DISTRACT HER.

A FEW DAYS LATER —

A FAMOUS SCULPTOR
IS HOLDING AN EXHIBI-
TION OF HIS WORKS.
LET US GO AND SEE IT,
VASAVADATTA.

ALL RIGHT,
IF YOU
INSIST.

AT THE SHOW, VASAVADATTA FORGOT
HER SORROW FOR A WHILE.

SUCH EXQUISITE
WORKMANSHIP!

WILL YOU
SELL THIS
TO ME?

YOU MIGHT
FIND THE
PRICE TOO
HEAVY.

WHATEVER IT
MAY COST, I AM
PREPARED TO
BUY IT. QUOTE
YOUR PRICE.

IT'S YOURS, IF YOU
AGREE TO DANCE
AGAIN.

VASAVADATTA HESITATED —

TO... DANCE...

YOU CAN'T GO BACK ON YOUR WORD. YOU HAVE AGREED TO PAY WHATEVER PRICE HE ASKS.

VASAVADATTA RELUCTANTLY AGREED.

THE NEXT EVENING, PEOPLE FLOCKED TO THE TOWN HALL.

AT LAST WE WILL SEE VASAVADATTA DANCE AGAIN!

THANKS TO THE CHIEF SCULPTOR OF OUR CITY. IT WAS INDEED A CLEVER BARGAIN!

AT THE END OF THE PERFORMANCE, VASAVADATTA RECEIVED THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. BUT INSTEAD OF MAKING HER HAPPY, IT ONLY MADE HER BROOD ALL THE MORE.

WHY DID THAT MONK SHUN ME WHEN THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE LONG FOR A SIGHT OF ME?

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, THE CHIEF SCULPTOR BEGAN TO VISIT THE DANCER TO CAPTURE HER IMAGE IN STONE.

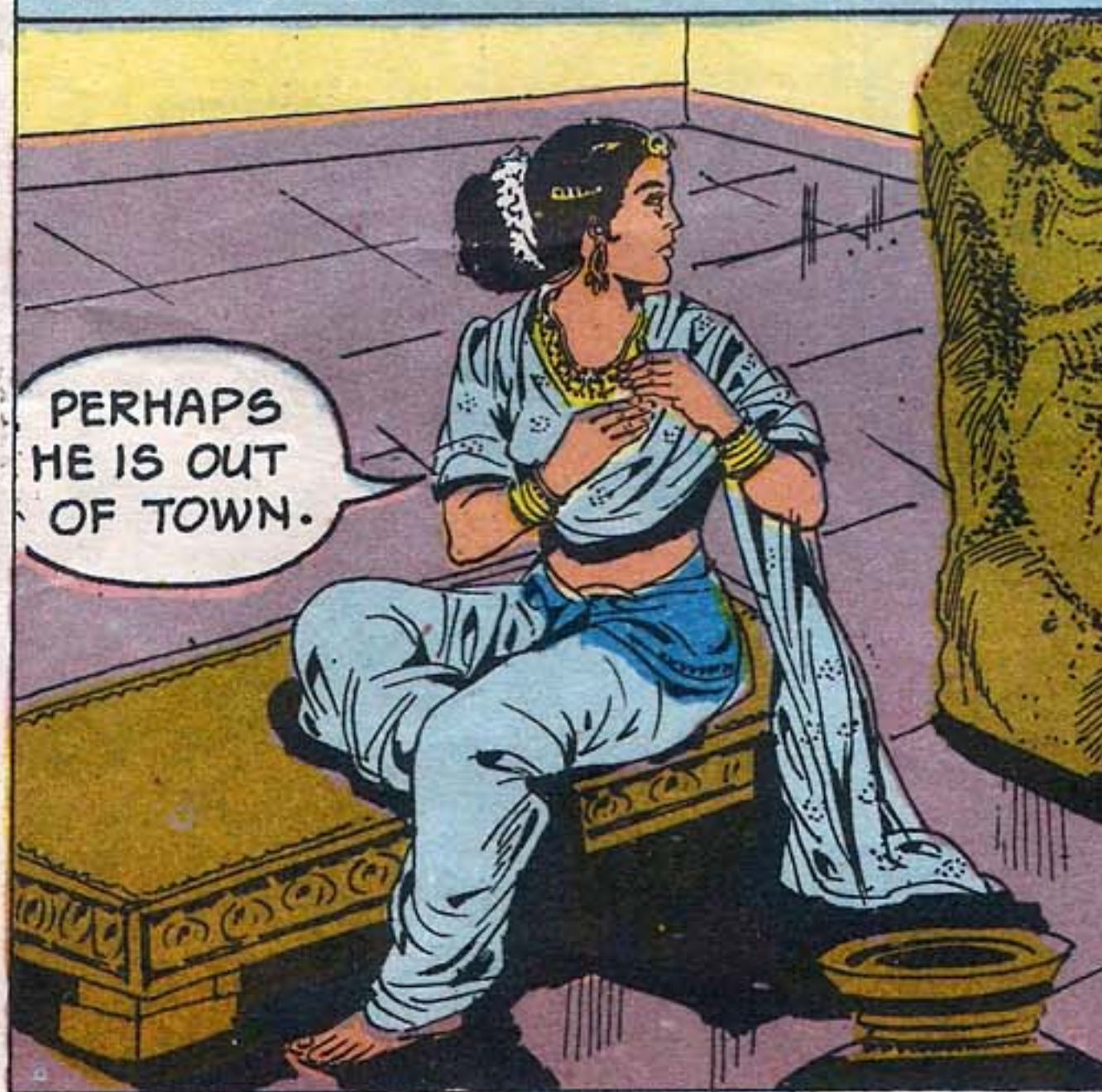


MY ART WILL DIE WITH ME. BUT YOURS WILL LAST FOR CENTURIES.

MY TALENT, WHICH BRINGS SO MUCH HAPPINESS TO YOU, ONLY MAKES MY ENVOUS RIVALS HATE ME.



A FEW DAYS LATER, THE SCULPTOR SUDDENLY VANISHED.



PERHAPS HE IS OUT OF TOWN.

WHY DOESN'T HE COME? THE WORK IS YET TO BE COMPLETED. IT'S THREE DAYS SINCE HE LAST CAME!



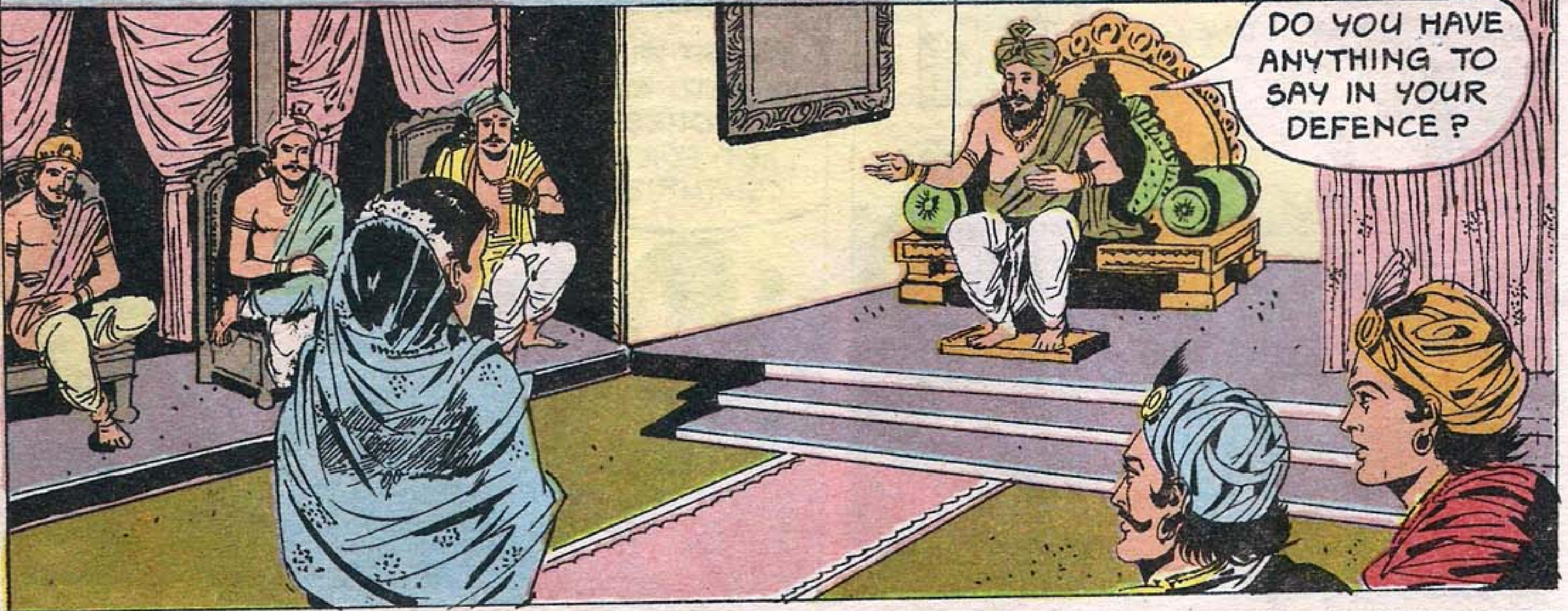
MEANWHILE, HIS FRIENDS AND RELATIVES TOO WERE SEARCHING FOR THE CHIEF SCULPTOR.

HAVE HIS RIVALS DONE AWAY WITH HIM?

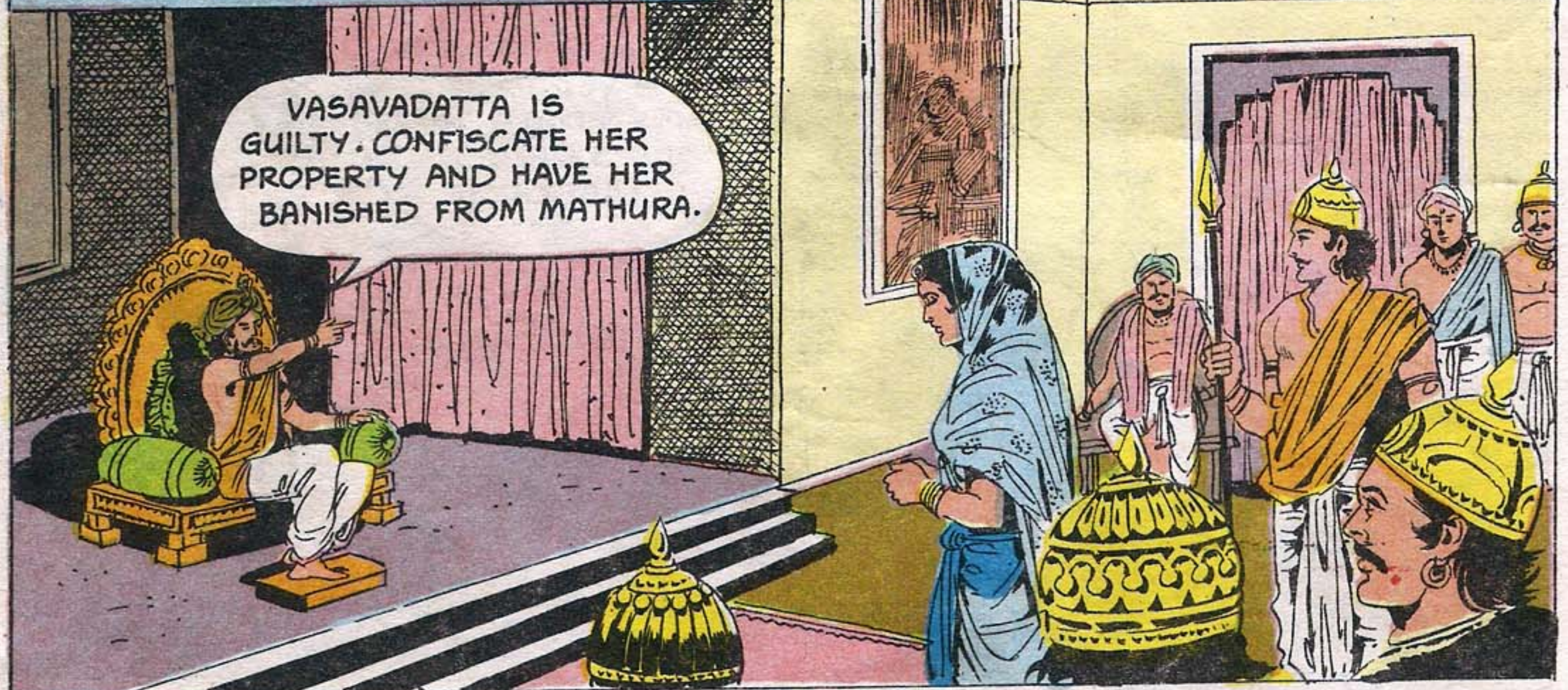
HE WAS LAST SEEN ENTERING THE HOUSE OF VASAVADATTA, THREE DAYS AGO.



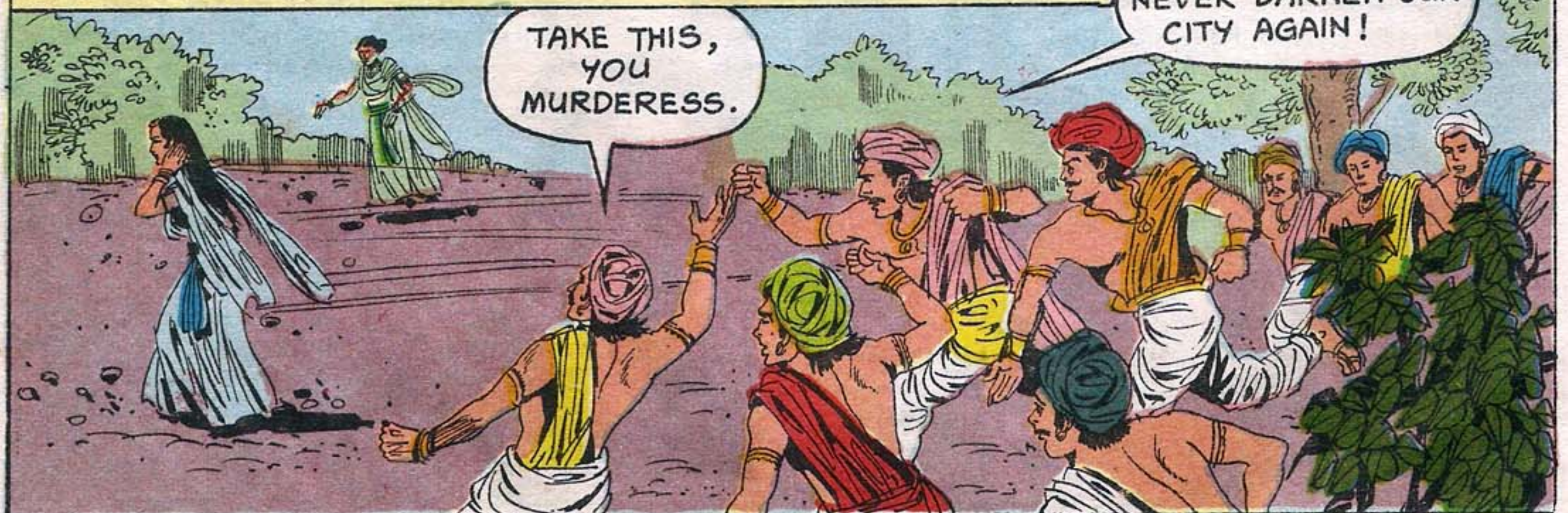
LATER, THE BODY OF THE MISSING SCULPTOR WAS FOUND BURIED NOT FAR FROM VASAVADATTA'S HOUSE. SHE WAS CHARGED WITH THE MURDER OF THE SCULPTOR.



VASAVADATTA HAD NOTHING TO SAY.



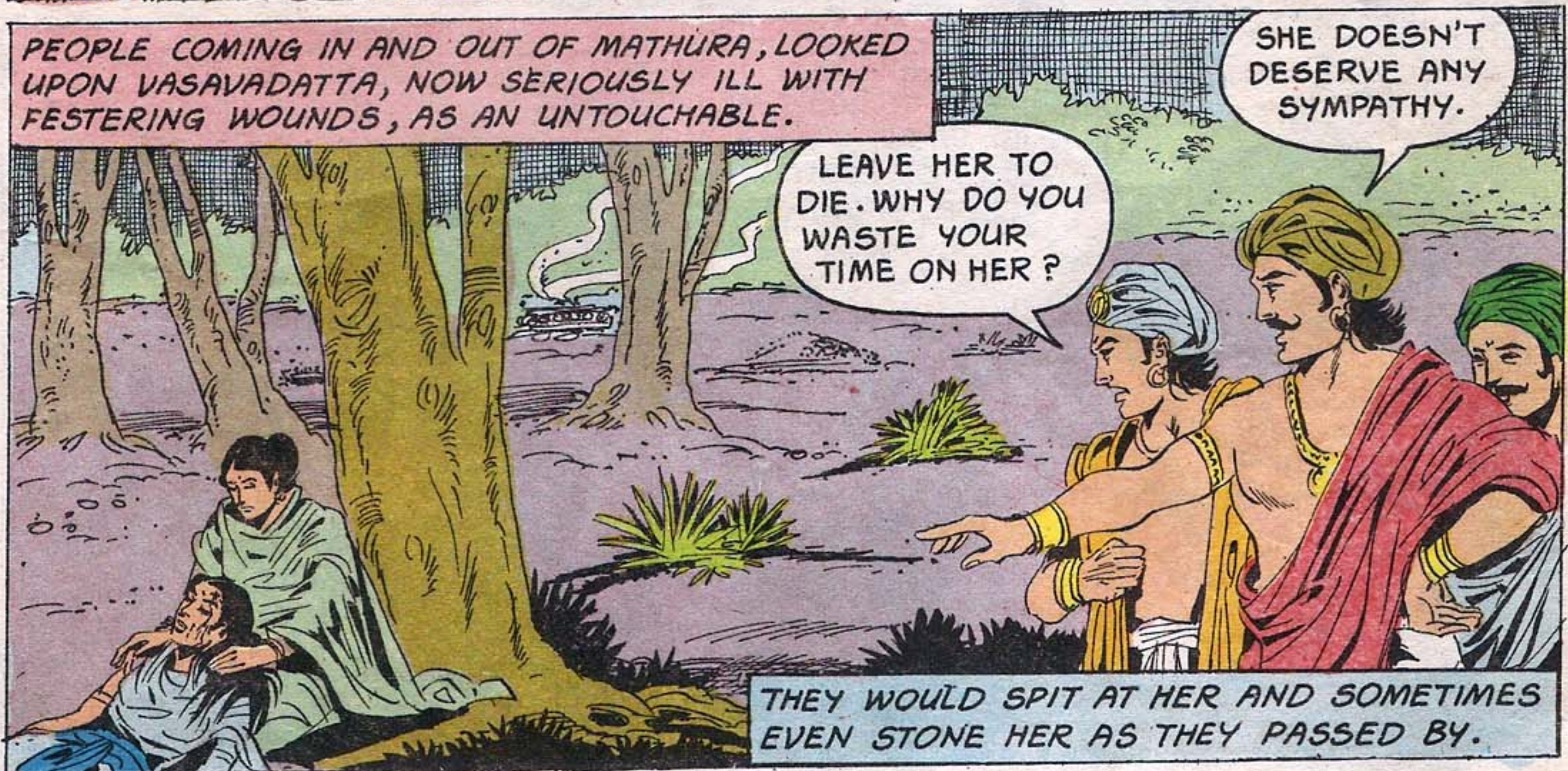
AS VASAVADATTA WAS TURNED OUT OF HER HOUSE, AN ANGRY MOB JEERED AT HER AND PELTED HER WITH STONES.



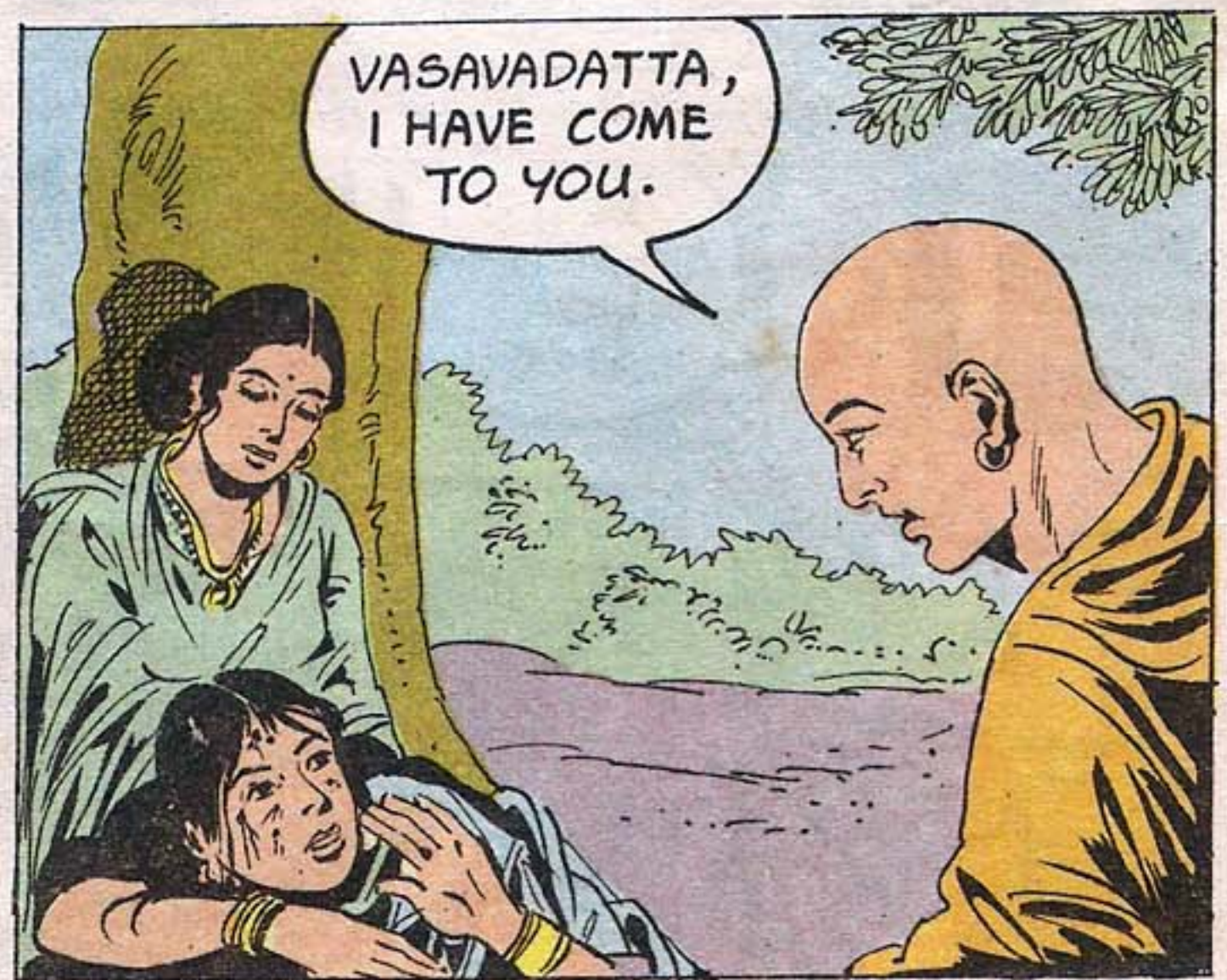
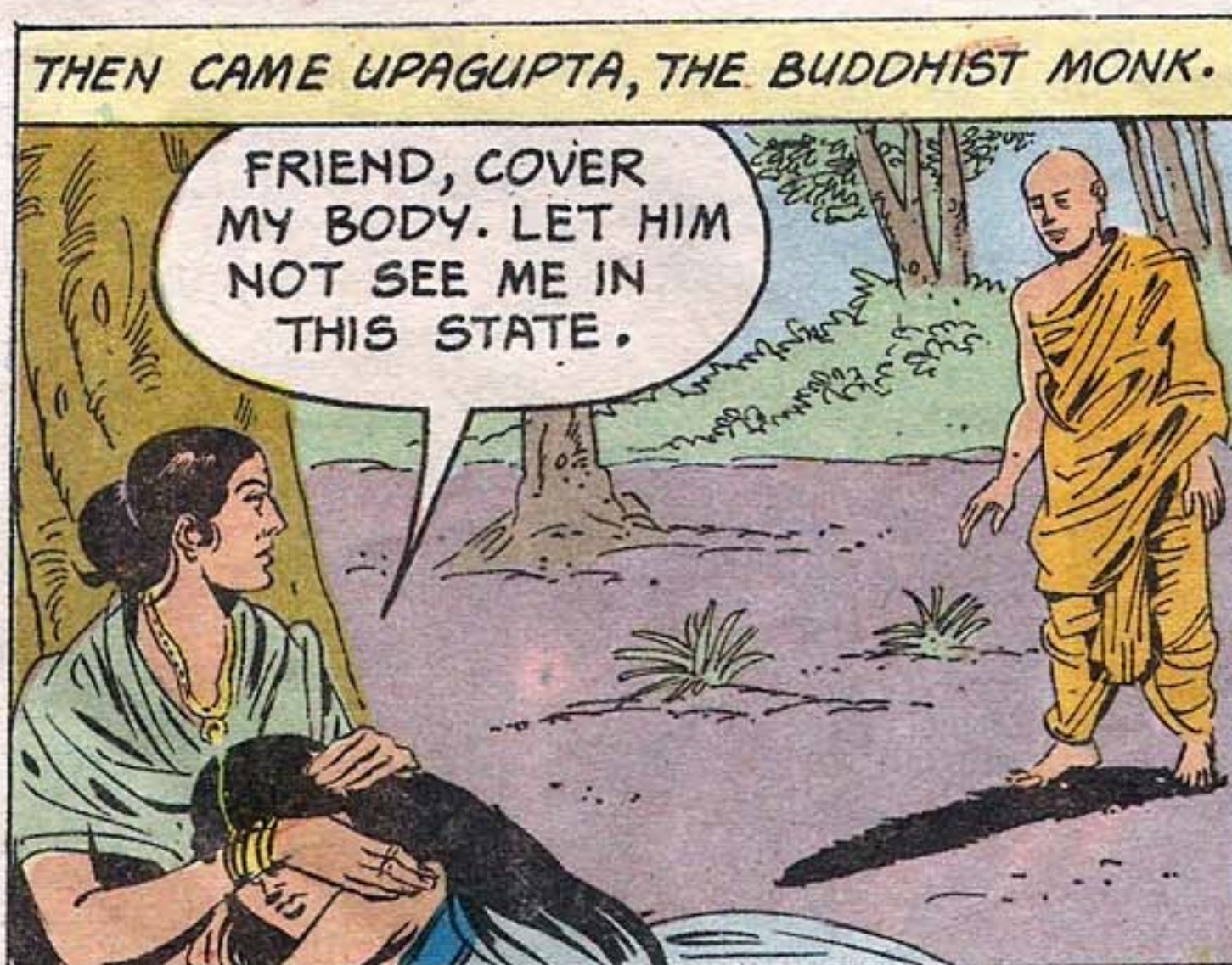
BLEEDING PROFUSELY, VASAVADATTA REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF MATHURA AND FOUND REFUGE IN A CREMATORIUM.

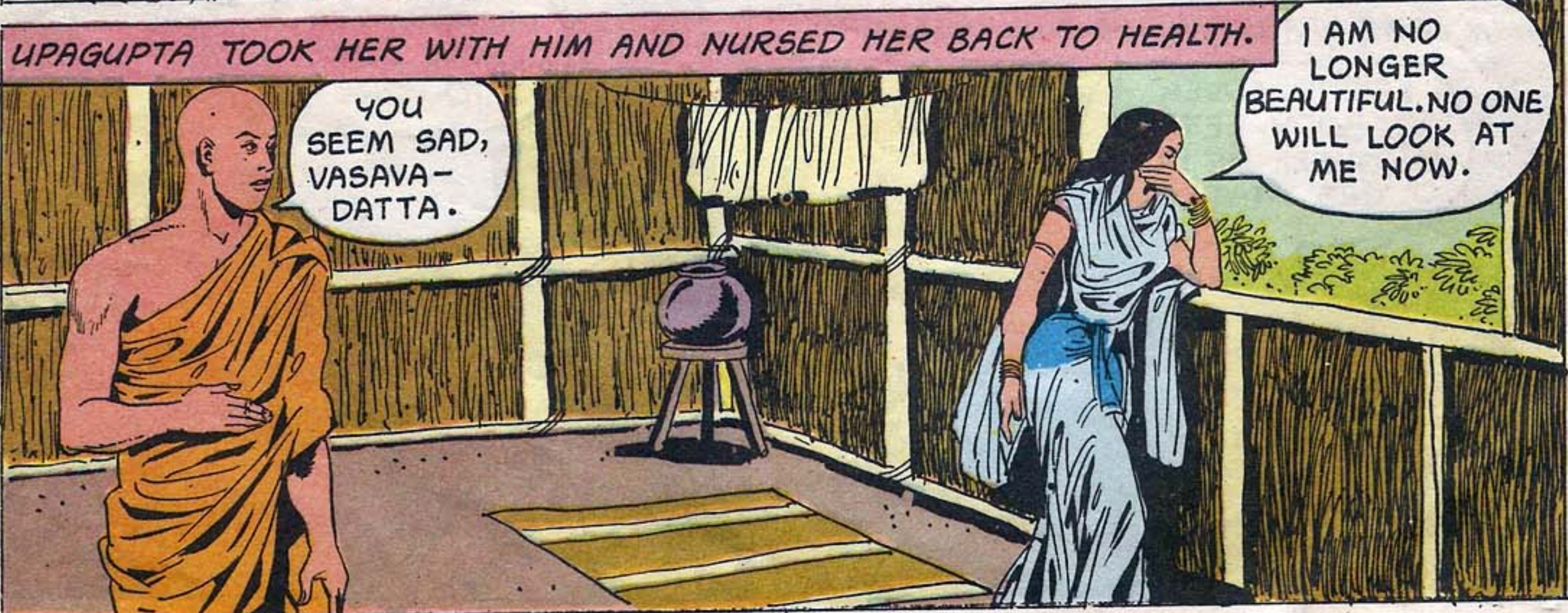
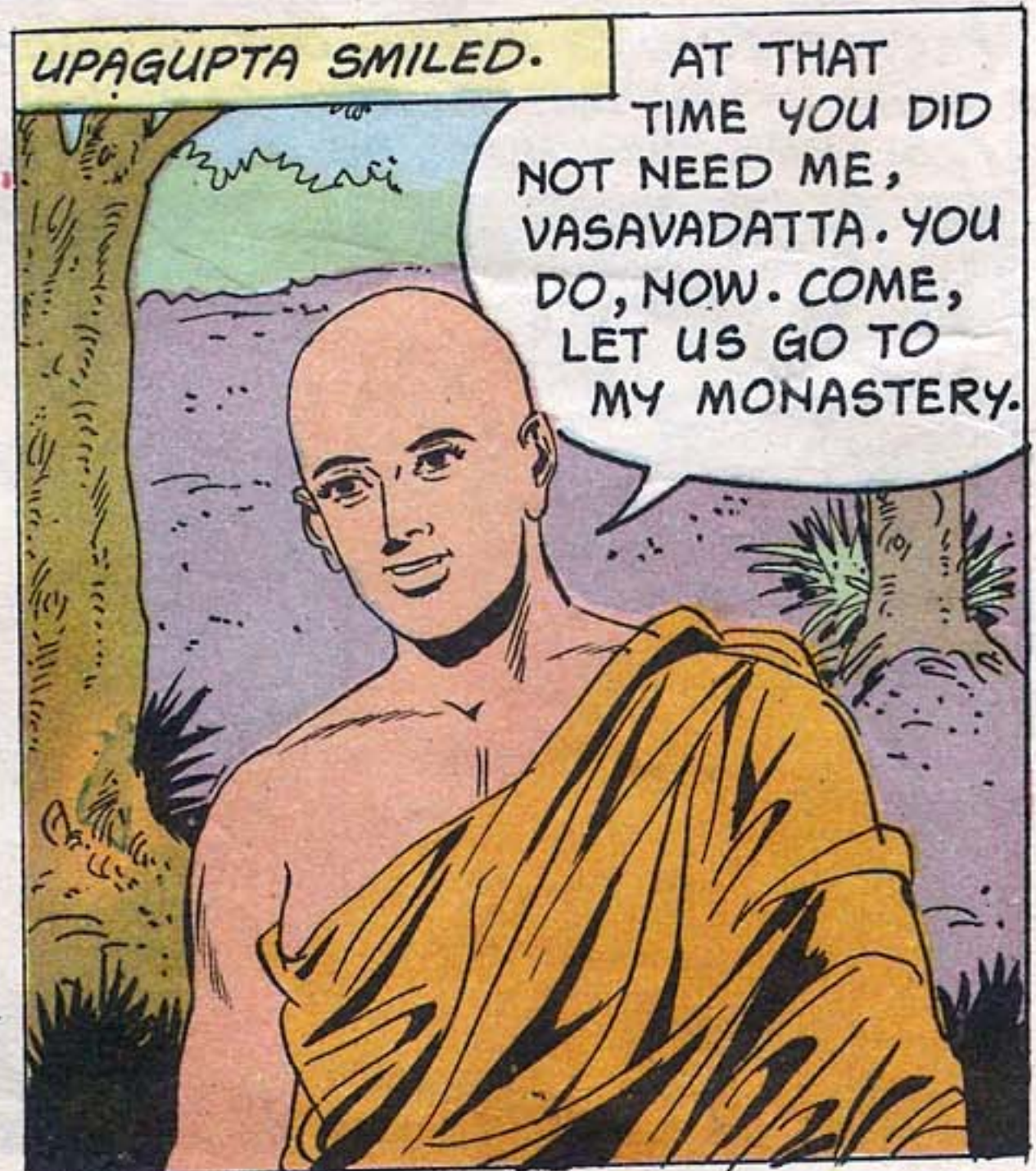
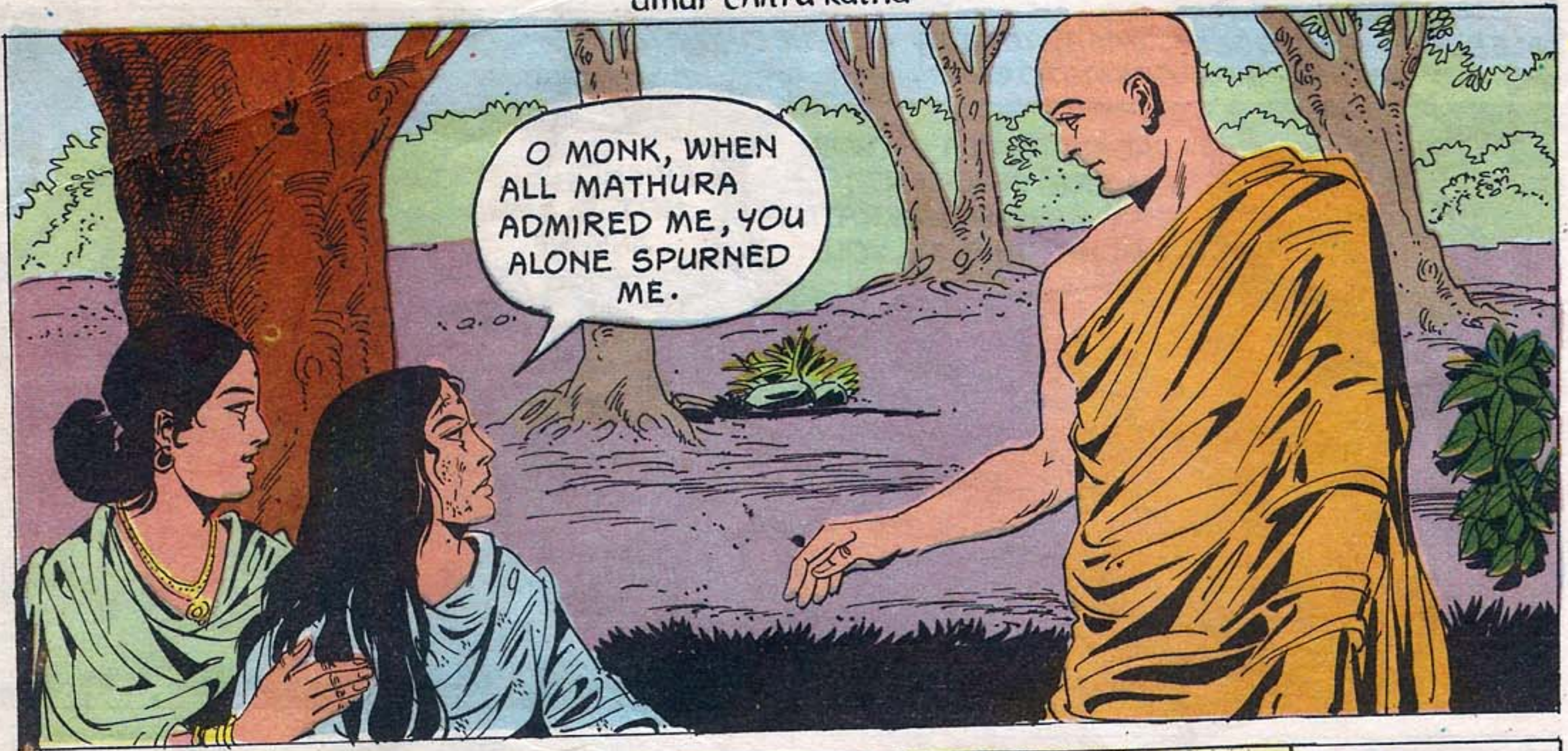


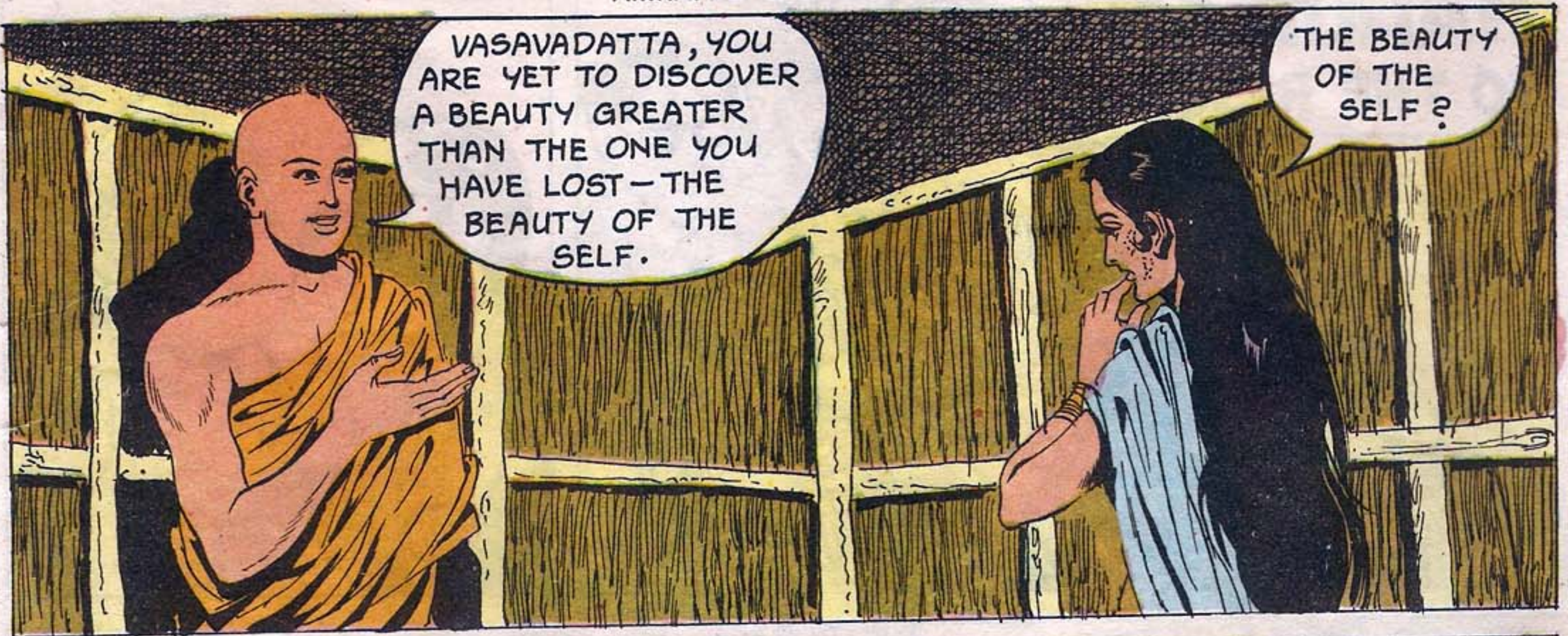
PEOPLE COMING IN AND OUT OF MATHURA, LOOKED UPON VASAVADATTA, NOW SERIOUSLY ILL WITH FESTERING WOUNDS, AS AN UNTOUCHABLE.



THEN CAME UPAGUPTA, THE BUDDHIST MONK.

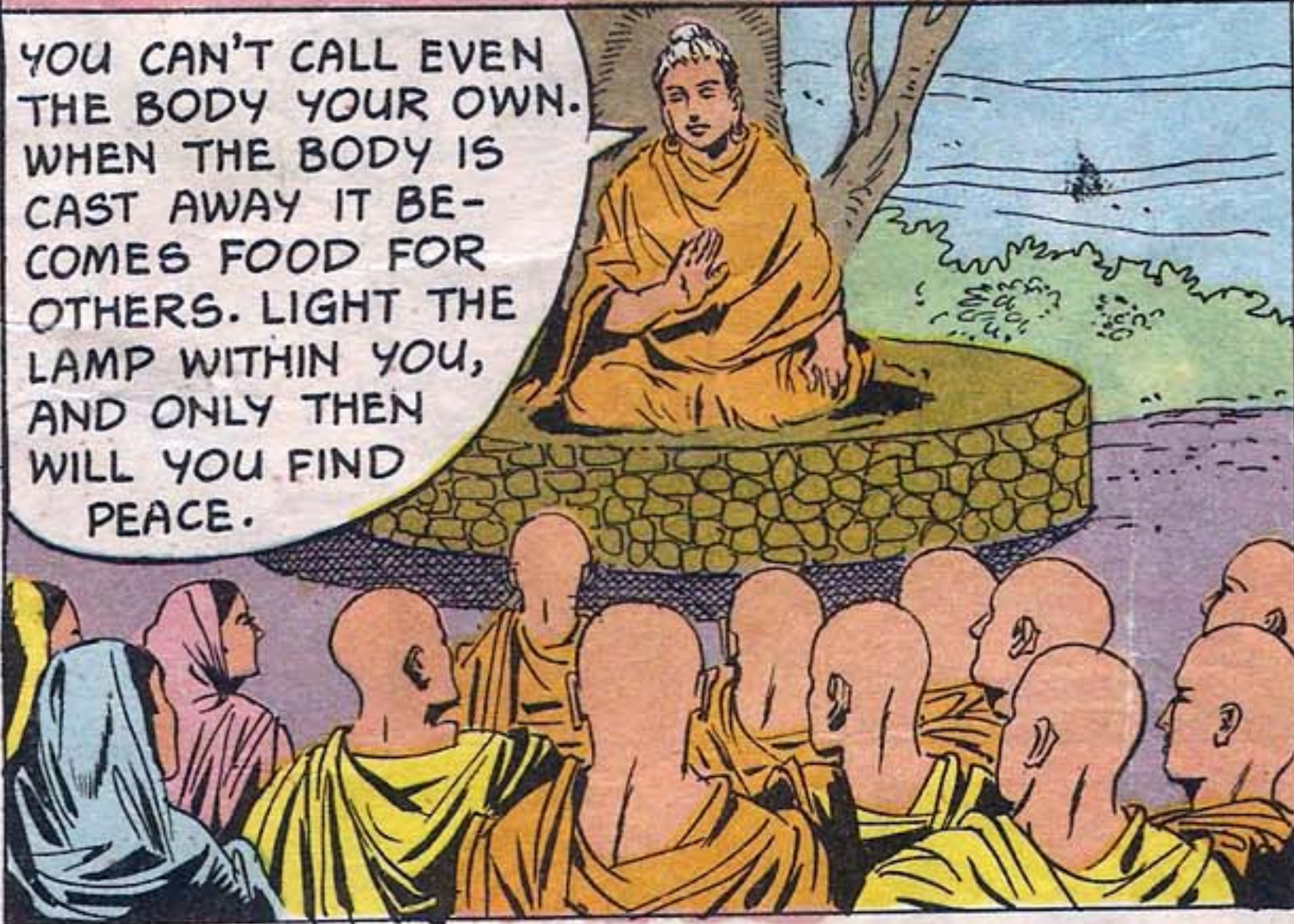






CURIOUS TO KNOW MORE, SHE BEGAN TO ATTEND THE DISCOURSES OF LORD BUDDHA.

YOU CAN'T CALL EVEN THE BODY YOUR OWN. WHEN THE BODY IS CAST AWAY IT BECOMES FOOD FOR OTHERS. LIGHT THE LAMP WITHIN YOU, AND ONLY THEN WILL YOU FIND PEACE.



VASAVADATTA FELL AT THE FEET OF LORD BUDDHA.

